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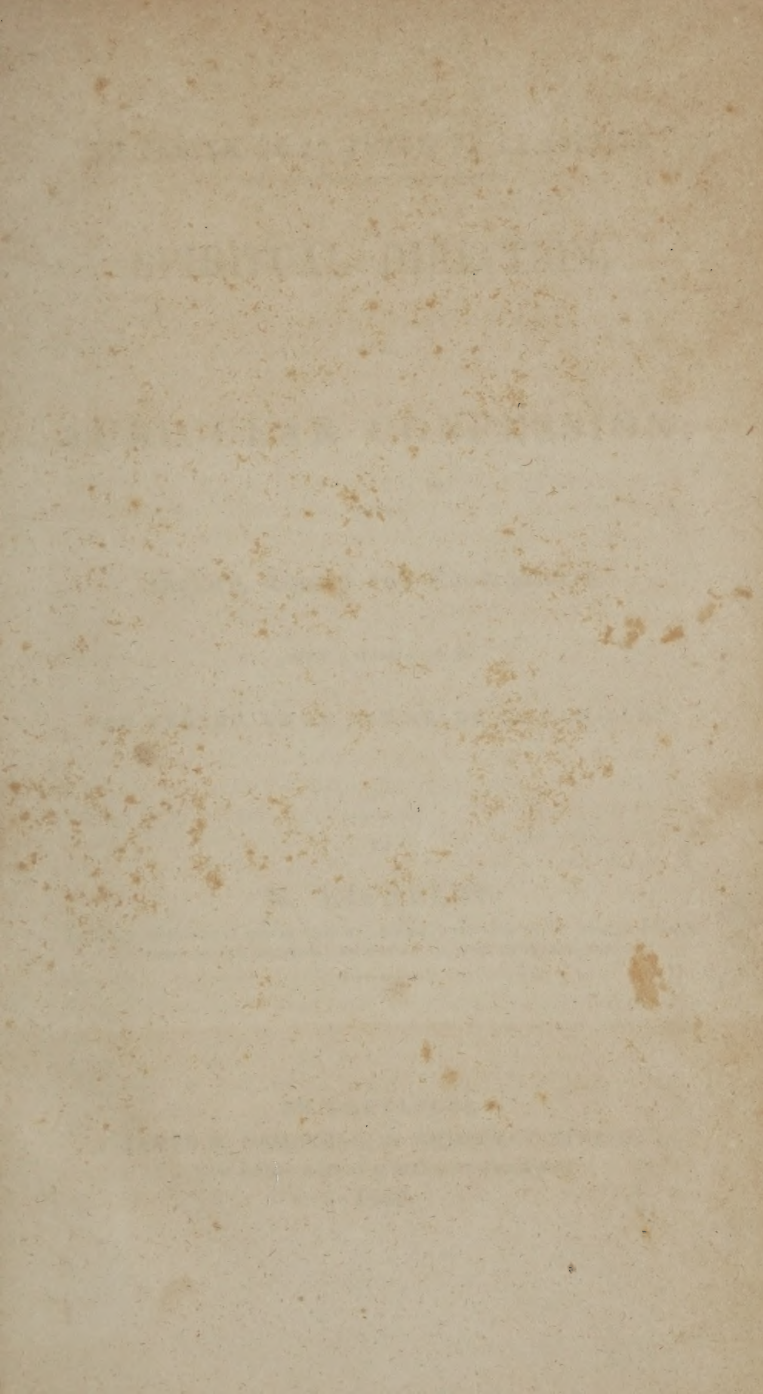
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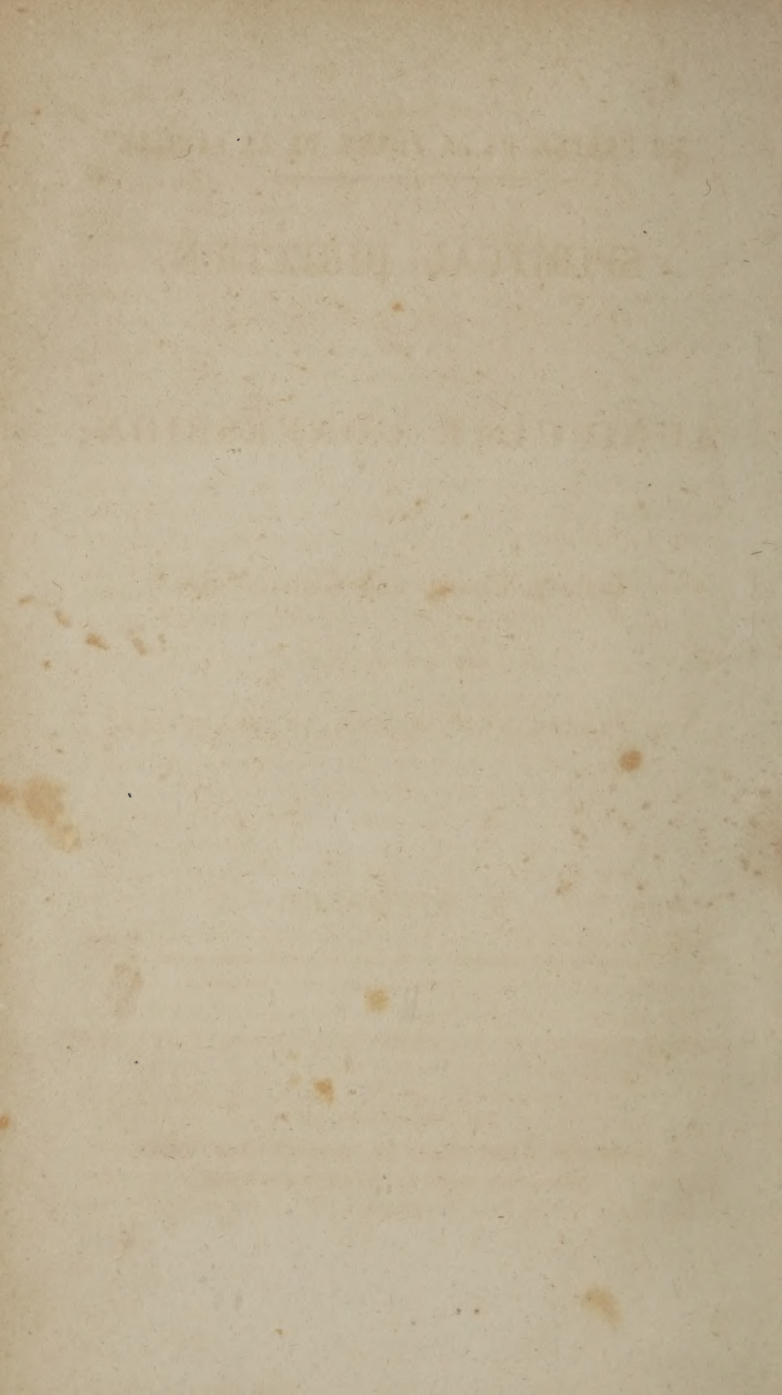














"DU PRÊTRE, DE LA FEMME, DE LA FAMILLE."

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SPIRITUAL DIRECTION,

AND

AURICULAR CONFESSION;

THEIR

History, Theory and Consequences.

BEING A TRANSLATION OF

"DU PRÊTRE, DE LA FEMME, DE LA FAMILLE."

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BY

M. MICHELET,

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN THE FACULTY OF LETTERS; PROFESSOR IN THE NORMAL SCHOOL;  
CHIEF OF THE HISTORICAL SECTION OF ARCHIVES OF FRANCE, ETC.

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PHILADELPHIA:

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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THE author of this book distinctly claims, in almost so many words, that France is the world. He says that it is the centre of Europe,—that all other nations are eccentric. This is a Frenchman's pardonable vanity; and we are not so anxious to deny the influence of France upon all Europe as a jealous Briton might be. While England and France debate that question, let us make an application, to our present purpose, of the fact that Michelet holds such an opinion.

When a man writes in such a spirit, if he speaks of the world, it is the French world. If he is talking of priests, they are French priests; by Woman, he means French women; and by the family, we are to understand the social relations of *La Belle France*. If we admit Michelet as a witness, the man and wife are oftener two, where they should be one, in that country than in any other. Nor does this differ with the received opinion. There have been causes enough to produce such an evil; causes which will be apparent to the reader as he proceeds, but which we could not here introduce, without, to borrow our author's expression, putting a large book into a small preface.

The work is, moreover, eminently intended for his countrymen, although its truths, of general application, are important in all countries, and in none are more interesting and vital than in this, where, it would seem, the old polemics are to be waged over again. The gibbering Gothic ghosts of the papal régime are gliding about in full day in *our* streets, as well as in those of Paris. They are cunningly dressed and disguised, made sometimes to look lovely, always to look meek. They challenge our

sympathy, and enlist our compassion. They betray our humanity into the giving them a refuge—too often in our hearts. Alas! poor ghosts! But the veil must be lifted from them. Their hideousness must be exposed, and this Michelet has done most thoroughly.

Practice is founded on precedents. Those precedents in their origin came from theory. Our author has gone, with strong nerves, and a most valorous stomach, into the nauseating literature, instructions, and theory of the *Quietists* and *Mystics*, whose theory, that perfection implies nothingness, required that a *director* should take charge of the *body*, while the soul floated above it, unconcerned by its acts, in the indefinite clouds of the *mystical all*. He has shown what were the early practical results of this, and how its shameful consequences compelled the theory to be shelved, and the propounders and preachers of it to be silenced. He shows also that it was not the obscure and forgotten alone who held to these vagaries, but he identifies with that party Fenelon, and others, whose names all the world honours.

Some of the quotations from the *Quietists* are of a character to make the reader shrink. Some of the examples cited of the consequences of their teachings make the heart sick. But a deep-rooted disease requires stringent remedies, and if the wound is probed deeply, it is because there is all necessity for it.

We have said that the *theory* was shelved. Why then, you are ready to ask, attack it now? Because, as we have remarked, theory originated precedents, precedents have established practice, and we have, in our day, the latter in its full life and vigour. The *Upas* still stands. Michelet has demonstrated in what filthiness and moral pollution such a tree took root; and he has shown, moreover, that in France, especially, the fruit is of a character fully establishing the origin of the tree.

Nor does the chain of his argument lack a single link. By incontrovertible quotations he has demonstrated that the Anti-*Quietists*, including their great champion Bossuet, were *Quietists* in practice. He has done more than this. He has shown by quotations from Bossuet's works and letters that he *wrote* *Quietism* as well as *acted* it; and these quotations are among the most



startling—nay, hideous, in the book! This, too, from Bossuet, whose eminent fame and excellent character gave him a position which cannot be moved in the Roman Church.

Nor does the argument stop here even. The author shows that it is no more necessary for a modern Romish priest to understand the subtleties in which his trade has its origin, than it is for a boy to know how gunpowder is manufactured to be able to put his own eyes out with it. He shows that the ignorant priests of our day, instead of doing less mischief with the implements furnished by the wise of old, than the wise themselves did, must, in the very nature of things, do more.

Such is the thread of the argument. We are constrained to pass over many things which might be said, and occupy our remaining space with still another important characteristic. This book, written by a Frenchman, for Frenchmen, in language and thought is most thoroughly and remarkably *French*. The reader may be startled at the freedom with which the author approaches subjects and themes which we are accustomed to speak of only with the deepest reverence. We do not doubt *his* reverence; but the strange forms of expression which he uses to express equally strange turns of thought, sometimes grate more than a little harshly on our ears. The reader is to bear the history of the book in mind at all times, and nearly upon every page.

The work is a part of a controversy in which Michelet has been for several years engaged with the Jesuits. It was provoked by certain remarks which he made in his course of Historical Lectures, in the College of France. The Jesuits wrote and declaimed against him. They slandered him in private, and abused him in public. They preached against him in their pulpits, and even sent their pupils to disturb audience and lecturer, while matter disagreeable to them, as truth always must be to falsehood, was in course of delivery. Well has he retaliated upon them in this volume!

The Roman Church has much to answer for. Numbering among its clergy thousands of practical but secret infidels, the worst terrible scoffers against Christianity have come from among the pupils of Jesuit colleges. Voltaire was one. Other infidels

received their early education at the hands of ghostly teachers. Their minds revolted at the character of priestly traditions, the empty quibbles with which priests smothered the truth—the sophistry with which they belied it, and the carnal affections which led to their materialism. In a word, the brilliant French infidels could not be idolaters. In discarding what was manifestly monstrous, they threw away all; and even this was not done entirely of their own impulse. They retreated but a little way at first—they were driven to extremes by anathemas.

Like causes produce very nearly like effects on all minds, differing in extent, according to the capacity of the mind acted on, or its greater or less interest in the subject. The Romish Church, as has long been known, has unchristianized the men of France, making them, if not declared infidels, practically indifferent, which, in this case, is only a quiescent state of the same habit of mind; ready to blaze again into the fearful atrocities of profanity which marked the French Revolution—a revolution which was quite as much due to priestly as to regal tyranny. The latter weighs down on man's outward weal—the former poisons the springs of his heart.

If we see then an occasional shade of indifference to Christianity in Michelet, we know to what to impute it. But we see also, in his love for his mother, in his genuine philanthropy, in his high aspirations after him who, we fear, is in modern France THE UNKNOWN GOD, all the elements of a firm religious faith. He respects and loves true Christianity, if only because he knows it must be the opposite of Jesuitical teachings and practice.

*“Can these dry bones live?”* Yes, and, in God's own time, they will. Superstition and sophistry will give way before the light of Christian truth. The blow is aimed at the root of the Romish Upas—the celibacy of the priesthood;—and France shall yet, with all the world, see and know the GREAT HIGH PRIEST, whom the fond inventions of men, and their vain and wicked traditions, have concealed from many a generation of unsatisfied and thirsting hearts.

PHILADELPHIA, June, 1845.



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# PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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THE Family is in question :

That asylum where we would gladly repose, after so many profitless efforts and dissipated illusions. We come home sadly wearied. Do we find repose there?

It will not do to dissemble. We must frankly acknowledge to ourselves the state of things as they are. There exists in the bosoms of our families a grave dissension—the most serious of all dissensions.

We may converse with our mothers, our wives, our daughters, on the common-place themes upon which we talk with mere acquaintances. We may speak upon business—upon the news of the day—but we may not open our lips in relation to the subjects nearest the heart—the moral life, the things of eternity, religion, the soul, the Deity.

Take the hour when one would fain unite with his family circle in a sympathetic community of thought—the hour of repose around the evening board. There, in your own home, at your own fireside, venture a word on these subjects. Your mother sadly shakes her head—your wife contradicts you—your daughter, though she remain silent, disapproves.

It would seem as if, in the midst of the women of your household, there sat an invisible man to contradict what you may utter.

And why should we be astonished at this state of the domestic relations? Our wives and daughters are educated and governed by our *enemies*.

This word has cost me a struggle to write, for many reasons, which I shall state at the close of the volume; but I have not passed my life in the search of truth to sacrifice it to-day to my personal feelings.

They are *enemies of the modern mind, enemies of liberty, and of the future*. It matters nothing that such a preacher or such a sermon is cited as *democratic*. Where one voice speaks in favour of liberty, fifty thousand are raised against it. Whom do they think to deceive by an artifice so gross and palpable?

*Our enemies*, I repeat it, in a sense the most direct, because they are naturally envious of marriage, and of domestic life. This, I well know, is less their fault than their misfortune. An old dead system, which works mechanically, is fit only for the dead. Life, however, will assert itself in the priest. He bitterly feels that he is shut out of the comfort of a family—he consoles himself in tormenting us in our households!

What will wreck this system is the apparent force which it has drawn recently from its unity, and the rash confidence which that has given it. Is this a moral unity—a real association of mind? Nothing like it! In a dead body, all the elements, if you let it alone, fall apart of their own tendency. But that does not forbid that with an iron frame you should bind together the dead carcass. Nay, it may be better done than with the living—you press it into a compact mass, and hurl it against adversaries.

The spirit of death, or—let us call it by its true name—



JESUITISM, in other days neutralized by the various religious orders, corporations, and parties, is now the COMMON SPIRIT which the clergy receive by a special education,—a fact which some of the leaders make no difficulty of avowing. A bishop has said, “*We are Jesuits—all Jesuits.*” Nobody has ventured to contradict him.

But for the most part the priesthood have not so much frankness. Jesuitism acts powerfully by those who are believed to be strangers to it—by the schools which educate the clergy—by the ignoramuses who educate the people—by the officers of the system which governs six thousand Sisters of Charity. Jesuits have a hand in hospitals, schools, charitable institutions, and every thing of that nature.

With so many establishments—and so much money—with the pulpit in which to cry aloud, and the confessional in which to whisper low—with the charge of the education of two hundred thousand boys\* and six hundred thousand girls—the spiritual direction of many millions of women:—Behold a vast machine! The unity which it possesses now, might, it would seem, alarm the state. Far from this, the combinations which the state forbids among the laity, it encourages among ecclesiastics. It has permitted them to engage in a most dangerous commencement among the poorer classes;—assemblies of workmen and of apprentices—associations of domestics who render accounts to the priests. Unity of action, and the monopoly of combination are certainly two great forces.

Well, with all this, it is a strange thing that the priest-

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\* There will not be found a word in this volume on the grave question which is here raised. Are those who have the daughters, to add the sons also to their monstrous monopoly? Will France confide her children to the subjects of a foreign prince? I have confidence in the good sense of the Chambers.

hood is feeble! This will appear more palpably hereafter, so soon as the clergy shall cease to receive aid from the state. It is manifest, indeed, now.

Armed with such aids, and with that farther ally which they have recently added—an active press; labouring everywhere, in the saloons, the legislature, the journals, the Jesuits have still not advanced one step!

And why do you not advance? If you will cease, an instant, your outcries and gesticulations, I will tell you. You are loud in clamour and many in number. You are strong in a thousand materials—money, credit, intrigue—all carnal weapons. But you are weak in God!

Nay, interrupt us with no new outcry at this point. Let us reason the matter further. Let us attempt, if you are men, to examine together what religion is. Possibly you spiritual men may not place it entirely in material things—in incense and the consecrated water. God should be, with you as with us, the God of the Spirit, of Truth, and of Charity.

The God of Truth has been revealed more in the two last centuries than in the ten preceding. By whose efforts has this been accomplished? Not by you, but by those whom you term the *Laity*, but who have been the *Priests of Truth*. You cannot claim one of the grand discoveries, one of the durable works which mark the progress of science.

The God of Charity, of Equity, of Humanity, has permitted us to substitute humane laws for the cruel systems of the middle ages. But you would maintain the latter in all its barbarity.\* The exclusive system of the middle ages suppresses contradiction, though it be done only by killing the contradictor. Ours admits differences of opi-

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\* See, among other facts, those in chapter 5th of Part Second.

nion—from the union of divers tones it creates harmony. We wish not that an enemy may die, but live and become a friend. “Save the vanquished,” cried Henry, after the Battle of Ivry. “KILL ALL!” said Pope Pius V. to the soldiers whom he sent into France, before the massacre of St. Bartholomew.\*

Your principle is the old and barbarously exclusive one which kills those who contradict it. You speak eloquently of charity. That, indeed, is not difficult, when the speaker takes care, as you do, to except his enemies from its operation.

God, who appears in our day in the progress of knowledge, in the gentleness of manners, in the equity of law—why do you disown him? It is for this that you are feeble—because you are impious. One thing you lack amid all your possessions—and that great lack is RELIGION.

What gives the present age its importance—nay, I may venture to say its sanctity—is the conscientious labour, which advances without distraction the common progress of humanity, and facilitates at its own expense the labour of the future. Our ancestors have dreamed much—disputed much. We of this age are labourers—behold how our furrows have been blessed! The soil which the middle ages left full of brambles has produced a harvest so abundant that it already envelopes, and will soon utterly conceal, the boundary which it was indolently believed must arrest the progress of the plough.

It is because we are labourers—because we daily return fatigued to our homes, that we have need, above all others, of repose in our domestic affections. It is necessary that our fireside should be truly our fireside, our table our own

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\* The authority for this statement is the *Life of Pius V.* by Catena, published at Rome, and of course by permission.



table. We cannot endure to find at home, in lieu of repose, the old disputes with which the world has done—we cannot tolerate that our wife or child should recite in our ears, in the words of another man, a lesson learned of him.

Women readily follow the strong. How is it that in this case they have attached themselves to the weak?

It follows of necessity that the wicked weak will supply by craft and artifice the deficiency of strength. That dark art, which suspends and fascinates the will, weakens and humbles it, I have sought to trace in this volume. In the seventeenth century the *theory* of “Direction” was published—in ours the *practice* is continued.

Usurpation does not confer a right. Those who have furtively usurped, are neither the better nor the stronger for what they have assumed. The mind and reason alone give a right to the strong over the weak—not indeed farther to enfeeble, but to strengthen.

The modern, the man of the future, will not resign woman to the influences of the man of the past. The spiritual direction of the confessor is, as we are about to see, a marriage more powerful than the other—a spiritual union. But he who has the spirit has all. Young man! espouse one of whom another has the soul, and it follows that such a marriage is to espouse divorce!

Things must not thus continue. Marriage must again become marriage indeed. The husband must associate the wife with himself, in the round of ideas and of progress more intimately than he has done hitherto. He must sustain her if she wearies, and support her in an even pace with himself. Man is not innocent of what he now suffers—he is constrained to accuse himself of it. In this time of ardent emulation, and far-reaching research, man, anxious to press to the future, has left woman behind him.

He has precipitated himself in advance—she has receded. Let this happen no longer. Take her by the hand! Hear you not your infant's cry? The Past and the Future you are seeking by different paths. You will find both united in the cradle of the child!

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My course for 1844 will shortly be published under the title of **ROME and FRANCE**.

The theme of this book, intimated in two or three of my lectures, could not be treated there. It is of a nature too familiar.

The work presented a grave difficulty—that of speaking with decency on a subject which our adversaries have treated with incredible grossness. “To the pure all things are pure”—I know the maxim, but I have often preferred to let my opponents escape, when I had them in my power, rather than follow them into the marsh and mire.

The **FIRST PART** treats of **DIRECTION IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**. I have cited my historical proofs from among the best and purest of my adversaries—not from among those whose testimony would have been of most value. The seventeenth century was that in which I found *written testimony*; in that age alone was the hardihood shown of putting in full light the **THEORY OF DIRECTION**.

I could have multiplied quotations to infinity; but those who have read the History of Louis XI. know what value I place upon trifling detail. I have cited little, but that exactly, and carefully verified. The falsifiers, whom we have taken *in flagranti delicto* at each step of our historical studies, are bold indeed to speak of *exactness*. They can talk at their pleasure, but they will never succeed in inducing us to put *their* names face to face with names known for honesty.

SECOND PART. OF DIRECTION IN GENERAL, AND ESPECIALLY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. This second part is the result of a careful inquiry into contemporary facts. I have seen, listened, interrogated ; I have weighed the evidence, and compared it with facts which I knew long ago. These facts more ancient, and that recent inquiry, I have tested before the jury which I bear within me.

THIRD PART. OF THE FAMILY. I make no pretensions fully to discuss this vast subject. I wish simply to indicate what marriage and the family relations should be in their truth and integrity ; and how the circle, broken in upon by a foreign influence, can be repaired and re-established.

I think it my duty to close with one word to my adversaries. I have written this book without hate. I will willingly say, reversing the pagan sentiment, "O my enemies, there are no such things as enemies." If this book, severe as it may be upon the priests, shall have any effect upon the future, it is the priests who will be most benefited. Many among them have thus judged of it ; and have made no difficulty in answering my inquiries. Yes—may this book, all feeble as it is, hasten the time, when, freed from an artificial system, in our day absurd and impossible, the priest may become A MAN again, resume his natural position, and take his place in the midst of us.

*Jan. 1845.*



## PART FIRST.

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### SPIRITUAL DIRECTION IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

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#### CHAPTER I.

*Devout Reaction of 1600.—Influence of the Jesuits over Women and Children.  
—The Savoyards.—The Vaudois.—Violence and Gentleness.—St. Francis  
of Sales.*

ALL the world has seen, in the gallery of the Louvre, Guido's beautiful picture—The Annunciation. The drawing is incorrect, the coloring false—and yet, notwithstanding all, the effect is enchanting. Seek not there the scrupulous austerity of the old schools. Nor will you find in Guido the young and strong hand of the masters of the Renaissance. The sixteenth century had passed, and at the date of this picture, all was softened. The figure in which the painter evidently delighted—the angel—according to the refinement of that effeminate day,\* is a pretty youth of the choir—a cherub of the sacristy. He is apparently sixteen—the Virgin eighteen or twenty. The Virgin has nothing of the ideal or spiritual—the representation is altogether earthly: the portrait of a young Italian whom Guido painted at home, in his little oratory, on a commodious “Prie-Dieu,” or desk for prayer, such as was then used by the ladies of the court.

If the painter was inspired, it was not by the Gospel. His inspiration was much more probably by the devout romances

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\* “*Epoque blâée.*” The force of the expression cannot easily be given in English.

of that period, or the fashionable sermons which the Jesuits pronounced in their pulpit blandishments. The *Angelic Salutation*, the *Visitation*, and the *Annunciation*, were the subjects on which the imagination had long been exercised by seraphic gallantry. While looking at the picture of Guido, one almost thinks that he is reading *Bernardino*. We fancy that we hear the Angel speak Latin like a learned young clerk—the Virgin, a well educated damsel, answers in her own sweet Italian—“*O alto signore !*” This picture is valuable, as characteristic of its day.

Recall the gentle forms taken by the devout reaction of this era, that of Henry IV. One is astonished on the morrow after the sixteenth century to hear the chirping of a sweet little voice. The terrible preachers of the sixteenth century, the monks who carried muskets in the processions of the League, have suddenly become humane—in an instant, they have changed into benignity. It was necessary thus to lull to sleep those whom they had not succeeded in killing. Nor was this undertaking difficult. All the world had need of sleep after the religious wars; each had more than sufficient of a struggle without result, a combat in which nobody was victor; each knew his own party and his friends too well. At the end of so long a journey he must have been a good traveller who did not long for repose. The indefatigable Henry slept himself like the others, or wishing them to sleep, gave them the example; and surrendered himself with a good grace into the hands of his intriguing mistress Gabrielle d’Entragues, and his confessor father Pierre Cotton.

Henry IV. was the grandfather of Louis XIV.; Cotton the grand-uncle of Father la Chaise—representatives of two kingdoms, two dynasties—one that of kings, the other that of the Jesuit confessors. The history of the dynasty of the Jesuits would be very interesting. They reigned during the whole century, those amiable fathers, by the force of absolution and pardon—by shutting the eyes and keeping the mind in igno-

rance. They reached grand results by the most pitifully small means, and little concessions—secret transactions—rear entrances—back stairs.

The Jesuits could have pleaded that, pledged to restore the authority of the pope—that is to say, to administer medicine to the dead—they could have little choice of measures. Driven, without a hope of return, from the world of ideas, where could they resume the war, except in the field of intrigue, of passion, of human weakness?

There, no person could more actively serve them than the women. When they did not labour openly with the Jesuits, and for them; they were not the less useful indirectly, as instruments and means—the objects of daily compromises and transactions between the penitent and the confessor.

The tactics of the confessor do not differ much from the artifices of the mistress. The policy of the Jesuit, like that of the mistress, is often to reject; to make the suppliant languish by postponement; to punish, but gently, and at last to permit himself, by too great bounty of heart, to melt into kindness. This little management, infallible with a monarch both a gallant and a devotee, and compelled to receive the sacrament on certain fixed days, often put the state entirely in the power of the confessional. The king being thus caught and held, it was absolutely necessary that he should ransom himself in some manner or other. This amour cost him a state secret to the Jesuits—that illegitimate ordinance in their favour. Sometimes they would not release him without a pledge. To keep a mistress, for example, he was required to give up a son. How much Father Cotton must have dispensed to Henry IV to obtain of him the education of the Dauphin!\*

In this great enterprise, of enslaving man every where by

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\* The master-piece of Jesuit policy was obtaining the appointment of the most superficial man in France, the shepherd poet, Des Iveteaux, as the preceptor of the Dauphin—the Jesuit reserving to himself his moral and religious culture.



means of woman—and the child also by the mother—the Jesuits encountered more than one obstacle ; and one in particular formidable above all others—their own reputation. They were already too well known. One may read in the letters of St. Charles Borromeo, who had established them at Milan, and singularly favoured them, the character which he gives them—intriguing, shuffling, and assuming cringing, creeping disguises as masks for their overbearing pretensions. Even penitents, who found them, as confessors, very accommodating, could not always avoid a feeling of disgust toward them. The most simple easily discerned that an order which found *all* opinions *probable*, could hold none of its own. These famous champions of the faith in ethics were skeptics; nay, worse than skeptics. Theoretical skepticism may leave some sentiment of honour—but a doubter in practice—a man who now says *yes* by one act, and again *yes* to its contrary by another, must, of necessity, sink continually in morals; and lose, not only all principle, but, at length, all moral feelings and affections.

Their very appearance was a lampoon upon themselves.—Too clever in enveloping, they swathed themselves about with deceit, till it was visible and palpable. Like brass, badly gilded, or the toy saints in their gaudy churches, they were brilliant in counterfeit splendour at a little distance. False in expression, and in accent; in gesture, and in attitude affected; exaggerated and overdone in the making up, they were in too great haste to change with their position; versatile to an excess which put men on their guard even while it amused them. They could dexterously assume a part, or change the countenance with the hour; but assumed graces, and behaviour too wisely cautious, and mutable—movements tortuous and serpentine, beget any thing but the confidence of men who watch the actor. They laboured hard to seem simple, humble, lowly, honest people—but their grimaces betrayed them.

These people of equivocal mien had among the women a merit which atoned for all deficiencies—they loved children

so dearly! Never a mother, a grandmother, or a nurse could better flatter the babe into a laugh with nursery gibberish. In the churches of the Jesuits, the good saints of the order, St. Xavier and St. Ignatius are often painted, by an absurd anachronism, holding in their arms, cradling and kissing the divine infant.\* It was also on their altars and in their decorated chapels, where was commenced the manufacture of those little paradises behind a glass, into which women delight to look, and see a wax infant reposing amid flowers. The Jesuits love children so much, that they would be but too happy to educate all who are born. Not one of them, however learned, would have disdained to play the pedagogue, to instruct children in the first rudiments of grammar, and teach lads to decline.

Meanwhile there were many people, friends of the Jesuits, their penitents even, who would trust their souls with them, but hesitated to confide their sons to Jesuitical care. They would have been less successful even with women and children, if happy chance had not given them a *great infant*, as an auxiliary—an infant gentle and wise, who possessed precisely what the Jesuits lacked, to inspire confidence—a charming simplicity.

This friend of the Jesuits, who served them all the better that he was not himself a Jesuit, naively created, to the profit of these religious politicians, what they had long sought to invent or discover—the species, the tone, the true style of *la "devotion aisée."* The false never can assume the shade of life which it could take, if it had been one moment true. But before I speak of Francis of Sales, I must say a word of the theatre in which he moved.

The grand effort of the ultramontane reaction, towards the year 1600, was on the Alps, in Switzerland and in Savoy.

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\* "*Le divine poupon*," is the phrase found frequently in the pages of St. Francis of Sales, and other writers of that epoch.

They laboured strongly on both declivities, but employed means totally different. They showed on the two sides two opposite visages—the face of an angel and the aspect of a beast. The ferocious beast was in Piedmont against the poor Vaudois. In Savoy, and toward Geneva, they wore the angel visage. They could hardly do otherwise than deal kindly with a population whose peace treaties guarantied, and who had been shielded against violence by the lances of the Swiss.

The agent of Rome in these quarters was the celebrated Jesuit, Antonio Possevino,\* the professor, the erudite scholar, the confessor of the kings of the North. He himself organized the persecutions against the Vaudois in Piedmont, and he formed and directed his pupil, Francis of Sales, to gain over by address the Protestants of Savoy.

That terrible history of the Vaudois! How can I speak of it—or how can I hold my peace? Speak of it! It is too cruel. One cannot recount it, that his pen does not hesitate—his ink is weakened with tears.† If, however, I said nothing I could not make the reader fully appreciate the most odious hypocrisy of the system, the artful policy which employed totally opposite means for the same object—here, brutal ferocity, there, a strange gentleness. One word, and I shall have done with this. The most cruel executioners were *women!* the penitents of the Jesuits of Turin; the victims were *children!* In the sixteenth century, they destroyed infants. There were four hundred children burned at one time in a cavern. In the seventeenth century they stole them. The edict of pacification, granted to the Vaudois in 1655, promises,

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\* See his Life by Dorigny; and the Life of St. Francis by Bonneville.

† Read the three great Vaudois historians, Gilles, Leger, Arnaud. Consult the excellent map, and description of the country, in the History of M. Muston. When I entertained at my house, with so much interest, this son of the martyrs, I was far from imagining that his book, so marked by moderation, and by forgetfulness and pardon of injury, would cause his expatriation.



as a singular act of grace, that their children aged less than twelve should no more be taken. Above that age the theft was still permitted.

This new description of persecution—more barbarous than massacre—characterized the epoch when the Jesuits devoted themselves, above all other objects, to the education of youth. These merciless *plagiarists*\* wished only to educate them in their own similitude—to prepare them to abjure their faith—hate their families, and arm themselves against their own kindred.

It was, as I have stated, a Jesuit professor, Possevino, who renewed the persecution toward the time with which we are now occupied. The same man, while teaching at Padua, had for a pupil the young Francis of Sales, who had already passed a year at Paris, at the college of Clermont.† He was of one of those families of Savoy, very military and very devout, who, for so long a time, made war with Geneva. For the war of seduction over to his faith, which Francis was about to commence, he possessed all the necessary arms : devotion, tender and sincere ; language lively and ardent ; and a singular charm in his personal appearance ; generosity, beauty, gentle grace. Who has not felt this fascination in the smile of the children of Savoy—simple, but so intelligent !

All the virtues which heaven accords to man, must have been bountifully bestowed on him, we must fain believe,—since, notwithstanding the evil times, the bad odour, the wicked party among which he laboured in an artful and false world,—he remains still, for all that, *Saint Francis of Sales*. All that he has said or written, if not irreproachable, is charming,

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\* *Plagiarius*, in its proper sense, signifies a man-stealer.

† The beautiful portrait of *Sainte Beuve*, which every body has read, permits me to omit a crowd of details. I have simply thought it my duty to indicate, with precision, the influence which the Jesuits exercised on the saint, and the manner in which they accomplished it. Read the biographies by the Capuchin Bonneville, Friar Jean de St. Francois, the Monk La Riviere, the Jesuit Talon, Longuetterre, the Bishop Maupas, of Tours, and, above all, the Letters of the saint himself.

—full of heart and of the natural ease of a child of genius who, often causing us to smile, moves our sensibilities, nevertheless. There are every where living springs which bubble forth—flowers upon flowers—little books which are murmuring, as on a beautiful spring morning after a shower. It is hardly necessary to say, that he amuses himself quite too much with flowerets—that his bouquets are often those of a market woman, as his Philothea would say, rather than the simple buds of a shepherdess. He plucks all and far too many, and there are in the number colours coarse and ill-assorted. But this was the taste of his time; and the taste of the Savoyard, in particular, never fears the unrefined—nor would his education by the Jesuits teach him to avoid the false and specious.

But even if he had been a less charming writer, the singular attractiveness of his appearance would not have been less effective. His fair face and sweet figure, always inclining to the infantile, ravished at first sight. Little children, in the arms of the nurse, could not, when they had once caught a glimpse of him, withdraw their eyes. He passed his hands as if unconsciously over their heads—"Behold my little family," he would say, "Behold my little family!" Children ran after him—and mothers after their children.

"*Voilà mon petit menage !*" a curious conceit presents itself—"Petit menage,"—or "*Petit manège ?*" little family, or—little artifice? Though a child in appearance, at bottom the good man, with all his simplicity, was very shrewd. If he permitted to the devout such and such a little falsehood,\* is it necessary to believe that he denied the same privilege to himself? However that might be, his actual deceit was less in his words than in his position. He was content to be a bishop for the purpose of giving the example of sacrificing to the Pope the rights of the bishops. For the love of peace, and to cover with an apparent union the divisions of the Ca-

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\* Little falsehoods—little arts—little circumlocutions. Refer to volume viii. of his works, p. 196, 223, 342. Paris.

tholic church on the doctrine of grace, he saved the Jesuit Molina, accused of Pelagianism at Rome, and procured the decree of the Pope, imposing silence on both parties in the controversy.

But Francis, naturally so amiable, did not always confine himself to the means of gentleness and persuasion. In his zeal to convert, he called to his aid agents less honourable—interest, money, patronage—and, at last, authority, fear. He set the Duke of Savoy going from village to village, and counselled him, in a word, to pursue to the death those who refused to abjure their faith.\* Money, very powerful in that poor country, seemed to him an agent so powerful and perfectly irresistible, that he even went to Geneva in the hope to buy over the venerable Theodore Beza, and offered him, on the part of the pope, a pension of four thousand crowns. It was indeed a curious spectacle, to see a bishop and tutelar prince of Geneva, going about that city to lay it under siege; organizing a war of corruption against it, through France and Savoy. Gold and intrigue were not enough. A sweeter charm was necessary to soften and melt that unapproachable glacier of logic and criticism. Convents were founded, to attract and receive new converts, offering them the seductive allurements of passion and mysticism. They remain celebrated still, by the renown of Madames de Chantal and Guyon. The first commenced here the gentle devotions of the order of the Visitation. The second wrote there her little work “*Des Torrents*,” She seemed to be inspired with the Charmettes, Meillerie, and Clarens—sites and scenery near lake Geneva—like the Nouvelle Heloise of Rousseau—though certainly in a manner far less dangerous.

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\* New letters published by M. Datta, 1835, vol. i. p. 247. See also, upon the intolerance of Saint Francis, pp. 130, 131, 136, 141. In volume ix. of his works, read his remarks upon the duty of kings to strike with the sword all enemies of the pope.

## CHAPTER II.

*St. Francis of Sales and Madame de Chantal.—The Order of the Visitation.  
—Quietism.—Results of Religious Direction.*

ST. FRANCIS of Sales was very popular in France, and particularly in Burgundy, where there had remained, since the League, a strong leaven of religious zeal. The parliament of Dijon, invited him there to preach. He was welcomed by his friend, André Frémiot, who, at one time councillor of the parliament, had become archbishop of Bourges. The son of a president highly respected at Dijon, he was brother of Madame de Chantal, and great-uncle of Madame de Sévigné, her grand daughter.\*

The biographies of St. Francis and Madame de Chantal, to make their meeting at this time romantic and marvellous, suppose, with very little probability, that they had never seen, and hardly heard each other spoken of. They had met each other only in their visions and ecstasies. During Lent, when the saint preached at Dijon, he noticed her particularly above all the other ladies, and as he descended from the pulpit, he inquired—"Who is that young widow, who listened so attentively to the Word?" "That," said the archbishop, "is my sister, the baronness de Chantal."

She was then, (1604) aged thirty-two years. St. Francis was thirty-seven. She was, therefore, born in 1572, the year of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. She had, from her birth up, something of austerity, but was ardent and impetuous. When she was yet but six years of age, a Huguenot gentleman

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\* See the biographies of Madame de Chantal, by the Jesuit Fechet, and Bishop Maupas. See also her Letters, three volumes—unfortunately incomplete, published 1753.



gave her some sweatmeats—she threw them in the fire. “Monsieur,” she said, “see how the heretics will burn in hell, because that they believe not the words of our Lord! If you were to deny the king, my father could cause you to be hanged—what is the punishment then of those who continually deny our Lord?”

With all her devotion and passion, she had a systematic and exact mind. She had well presided over the house and the fortune of her husband. She administered prudently the business of her father and father-in-law, dwelling in the house of the latter, who would not else have bequeathed his wealth to the children of Madame de Chantal. It is enchantment to read the lively and delightful letters which open the correspondence of St. Francis of Sales with his “dear sister and dear daughter.” Nothing could be more pure, more chaste, but—why should we not say it?—nothing could be more glowing and ardent. It is curious to observe their simple art; the caresses, the tender and ingenious flatteries with which he covers the two families of Frémiot and Chantal. Now he has a word for the father, good President Frémiot, who commences in his library to read pious authors, and court heavenly visions. Now he addresses the brother—bishop and ex-councillor—and writes expressly for him a little treatise upon preaching. He does not even neglect the rude baron of Chantal—an old wreck of the wars of the League, who is the cross of his daughter-in-law. But the little children are those to whom, above all others, he best makes his court. He has for them a thousand tendernesses, a thousand pious caresses, which could hardly have occurred, even to the heart of a mother. He prays for them, and begs that the little innocents may remember him in their prayers.

One person alone it was difficult to soften in that family—the confessor of Madame de Chantal. In the struggle of the *director* against the *confessor*, the greatest address, and most skilful art and management were called into requisition, and the purpose of the saint was followed with zealous resolution.

The confessor was a devout personage, but of narrow and little mind, and little observances. The saint professed great friendship for him, and submitted in advance for the judgment of the confessor, the counsels which he should give his penitent. He offered encouragement to Madame de Chantal, who was not without doubts of her spiritual infidelity, and who, feeling herself on so easy a declivity, had fears that she had abandoned the narrow way of safety. The saint managed this scruple so adroitly to displace the confessor, that at length the baroness gave him to understand she could dispense with him.

The saint declared, like a true victor, who has nothing to fear, that he wished to bind her to nothing—he left her wholly free. The confessor, on the other hand, uneasy, chagrined, and jealous, wished undivided obedience from his penitents. The saint asked no obligation but Christian charity, which is pronounced by St. Paul the bond of perfectness. All other ties are temporal—even that of obedience; but charity increases with time, and is not cut off even by the grave. Love, says the Song of Solomon, is strong as death. He writes, in another place, with much naiveté and elevation: “I add not a shade to the truth; I speak before God, of my heart and of yours. Each affection has its particular difference, distinguishing it from all others. That which I hold for you has a certain particularity which infinitely consoles me, and which, above all, I must say, is extremely profitable to me. *I did not intend to say so much*, but one word brought on another, and then I think you a person of discretion.”

From that moment, having her always before his imagination, he associated her not only with his religious thoughts, but, what seems a little surprising, even with his acts as a priest. It was generally just before or after Mass that he wrote to her; it was of her and of her children that he thought, he says, *at the moment of partaking the sacrament*. The two performed acts of penitence on the same days, and communed toge-

ther, though far separated from each other. *He offered her to God when he offered him his son.\**

This wonderful man, whose serenity such a union as this never for an instant affected, soon perceived that the mind of Madame de Chantal was far from being as serene as his own. Her nature was strong, her heart profound. The people—the burgesses, the grave families of the magistracy from which she sprang—possessed minds less refined, but more sincere, more true, than the elegant and noble races who had been worn out in the preceding century. The burgesses were fresh; you find them every where zealous and influential. In letters, in war, in the arts, and in religion, they gave to the seventeenth century all that it had of weight or excellence.

Madame de Chantal, although she had resolved to become a devotee; had an unfathomable depth of passionate feeling. St. Francis had hardly left Dijon two months, when she wrote and wished to see him again. Accordingly they met, half way, in Upper Burgundy, at the celebrated hermitage of St. Claude. There she was happy, there she poured out her whole heart, making confession to him for the first time; there softly uttered the promise to place in his loved hands her vow to a conventual life.

Six weeks had hardly passed when she wrote that she wished to see him yet again. She was harassed now with storms and temptations. Surrounded with clouds, she *doubted even the faith*; she had no more strength of will—she would have flown, but alas, she had no wings! And in the midst of these great and gloomy distractions this strong-minded person became as a little child, and begged that he would no more address her as Madame, but always call her “Ma Sœur,” “Ma Fille,” as he had sometimes done. She writes in another

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\* “I have given you and your widowed heart, and your children daily to the Lord in offering him his son.” (*Letter of Nov. 1, 1605.*) “Heaven knows that I have not communed without you, since my departure from your city.” (*Nov. 24, 1604.*) Œuvres, vol. 8.

place, "There is a something within me which has never been satisfied." (Nov. 21, 1604.)

The conduct of the saint is worthy of observation. Far from holding Madame Chantal to the promise to take the vow of a recluse, which she had placed in his hands, he endeavoured to settle and establish her in her place as mother, with her children, and the two old men to whom she filled the relation of mother as well as daughter. He recommended as occupations for her mind, her duties, her business, the payment of debts. To get rid of her doubts, she was neither to reflect nor reason. She wished to read some good books. He directed her to some bad mystical treatises. If the ass is obstinate, (it was thus he styled the flesh,) it is necessary to *cajole* it with some blows of discipline.

He appeared to have felt very sensible at that time, that meetings between two persons so united in heart were not without their inconveniences. To the entreaties of Madame Chantal, he replies with prudence: "I am tied here, hand and foot; and as for you, did not the inconveniences of past journeys very much depress you?" This was written in October, on the eve of a season rude enough on the Jura and on the Alps. "We shall see each other between this and Easter."

She went at that time to see St. Francis at the house of his mother; then returning to Dijon, fell dangerously sick. Occupied with the controversies of that period, he seemed to neglect her. He wrote less and less, feeling no doubt the need of clogging the wheels upon a route which was all too rapid. As for her, the whole of this year (1605) was passed in struggles between doubts and temptations. She was not decided, at the close, whether to enter a Carmelite nunnery, or marry again.

A great religious movement took place in France—very little spontaneous, carefully premeditated, and exceedingly artificial, but, nevertheless, immense in its results. Rich and powerful families, instigated by zeal and by vanity, gave it the im-



pulse. By the side of the Oratory founded by cardinal Berulle, Madame Acarie, a devotee, engaged heart and soul in devout intrigues, established the female Carmelites in France, and the Ursulines at Paris. The impetuous austerity of Madame de Chantal was forcing her toward the Carmelites—she, several times, consulted one of their superiors, a doctor of the Sorbonne.\* St. Francis felt the danger, and attempted no more to resist Madame de Chantal's passion for the life of a devotee. From that time he accepted her. In a charming letter he gave her, in the name of his mother, his young sister to educate.

It would appear that while she had this beloved pledge she was more tranquil—but it did not remain with her long. The child, so much loved and cherished, died at her house, in her arms. She could not conceal from the saint that, in the height of her grief, she had desired of the Deity rather to take her own life—that she had prayed him to take, instead of her pupil, one of her own children!

This took place in November, 1607. Three months after, we find in the letters of St. Francis the first idea of drawing to himself a person so well proved, and who seemed otherwise an instrument of the designs of heaven.

The exceeding alacrity—I might almost say the violence—with which Madame de Chantal broke through all ties to follow a direction which had been given after so much delay, indicates only too evidently the warmth of the passion in her ardent heart. It was painfully difficult to take leave of those two old men, her father and father-in-law; and her son, it is said, even couched himself on her threshold to prevent her passing over it. The good old M. Frémiot was gained over less by his daughter than by the letters which she induced St. Francis to write to him. We have yet extant the letter—resigned, but all moistened with his tears, in which the old gentleman gave his consent. That resignation seemed not to have long endured. He died in a year afterwards.

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\* Life of Berulle, by Taharaud. Works of St. Francis, vol. viii.

Passing over the body of her son, and escaping from her father, she arrived at Annecy. What would have been the result, if the saint had not provided fuel for the too powerful flame which he had kindled and increased, much beyond his wish or intention!

On the day after Pentecost, he called her to him, after the mass was ended, "Well, my daughter, I have decided what I will do with you." "And I," said she, sinking upon her knees, "have determined to obey." "You shall enter the sisterhood of St. Clara." "Behold me all ready!" she answered. "No, you are scarcely strong enough; you shall be a sister in the hospital of Beaune." "In all as you wish." "No, that is not yet what I would have you—be a Carmelite." He proved her thus in many modes, and having found her in all obedient, said at length—"Well, we will have nothing of all that; heaven calls you to the Order of the Visitation."

The Visitation had nothing of the austerity of the ancient orders. The founder himself said that it was *almost not a monastic order*. No troublesome observances—no vigils—few fasts—a brief office—short prayers, and in the commencement no cloisters. The sisterhood, waiting the visit of the divine spouse, visited him in the poor and sick, who are the living members of his mystical body. Nothing could have been better combined with devotion to calm the inward tempest than this mixture of active charity. Madame de Chantal, who had been a good mother of a family, and a wise mistress of a household, was happy to find, even in her mystical vocation, employment for her economical and exact habits of mind. She devoted herself to the laborious details of founding a great order, and of travelling, under a beloved direction, from foundation to foundation. It was a double proof of wisdom in the saint to employ her, and to keep her at a distance from himself.

With all this prudence, it is necessary to state that the happiness of labouring in concurrence—of founding and creating

together a new religious order, strengthened still more an attachment already strong. It is curious to observe how they drew still closer the tie, in struggling to unravel it. At the same moment that he directed her to detach herself from him *who was her support*, he protests that *that support shall never fail her*. On the very day on which he lost his mother, he wrote the following strong words: "To you I speak—to you, I say, to whom I have given the place of that mother in my memorial at the mass—but without taking from you the place which you had, for I know not how to do it—so firmly you keep what you hold in my heart—and thus you have now *both her place and your own!*"

I know not that an expression more strong than this was ever uttered upon a day so solemn. How must it have burned into a heart already aching with passion? Can any one be astonished that after this she writes to him, "Pray that I may not survive you?" At each instant he wounds, and heals only to wound anew.

The sisterhood of the Visitation, who have published a portion of the correspondence of Madame Chantal,\* have prudently suppressed much, which they themselves say is fit only to be locked up in the cabinet of charity. There remains, however, sufficient to show how deep the wound which she carried even to the tomb.†

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\* I have read in no language any thing more ardent, more indicative of mental struggle—more naive, and yet full of deep meaning, than a letter by Madame de Chantal on *desire and the agony of disappointment*. By its obscurity, no doubt it was, that this letter escaped suppression by the sisterhood. Letters, vol. i. p. 27, 30. See also a letter in the works of St. Francis, on the same subject, in vol. x., dated August, 1619.

† Twenty years after the death of St. Francis, in the very year in which she herself died, (already revered as a saint), she wrote several letters to the stern abbé of St. Cyran, then a prisoner at Vincennes. The purpose is to exchange with him the recollections of the dear departed. Even that most austere of men, the abbé seemed for a moment touched and softened. Vide Letters Christian and Spiritual of Jean du Vergier de Hauranne, abbé of St. Cyran.

The Visitation being sustained neither by active charity, which was interdicted soon after the foundation, nor by the intellectual culture, which had constituted the life of the holy spirit in other convents of the middle ages, there remained for it, it would appear, only mystical ascetism. But the moderation of the founder, in conformity with the lukewarmness of the times, had banished from the institution the austerities of the ancient orders—those cruel observances, which killed the senses, and even the body. There was, then, in the new order, neither activity, study, nor austerity. In this void two things showed themselves at the commencement. One was a trifling spirit in the taste for small observances and bizarre acts of devotion like that of Madame Chantal, in pricking into her flesh the name of the Saviour. The other was an attachment to the director without rule, bound, or measure.

In all that concerned St. Francis of Sales, Madame de Chantal exhibited great weakness. After his death, her mind wandered, and she gave way to the complete dominion of dreams and visions. She believed that she recognized his dear presence, in the churches, in a celestial perfume, which she alone perceived. She carried to him, in his tomb, a little book, composed entirely of what he had said or written on the Visitation, and prayed that if there was any thing contained in it contrary to his intentions, he would cause it to be obliterated!

In 1631, ten years after the death of St. Francis, his tomb was opened with solemn observances, and his body was found still entire. “It was placed in the sacristy of the monastery, where, at nine in the evening, the world having retired, she called together her community, and made an oration near the body, in an ecstasy of love and humility. Forbidden to touch the body, she gave a signal proof of obedience and self-denial in abstaining even from kissing her hand to him. On the morning of the next day, having obtained permission, she stooped to carry the hand of the ever blessed to her head. As if he had been in life, the hand acknowledged her devotion,



by a paternal and tender caress. She distinctly felt this supernatural motion. The veil which she then wore is still kept, as a relic of double sanctity."

Although others may be embarrassed here to find the true name for this respectable sentiment, it is only a false reserve which arrests them. They call it filial love, or fraternal love. We call it by a name which we esteem sacred, simply, *love*.

We must believe St. Francis when he declares that this sentiment powerfully assisted his spiritual progress. But it was not equal to this in all cases. We must examine what was the effect of it upon Madame Chantal.

All the doctrine which can be found in the works of St. Francis, full as they are of excellent practical counsels, may be summed in the two words *love* and *wait*—wait the visitation of the Divine Spouse. Far from counselling the action or the exercise of the will, he fears even the movement of volition. He even excepts to the word *union* with God, because it implies a movement to obtain it. He prefers the word *unity*.—The devotee must wait and rest in *love and indifference*. "I desire few things," the saint writes, "and those but faintly. I have next to no desires—if I was to be born again, I would have none whatever. If God would come to me I would also go to him; *if he would not come to me*, I would contain myself, *and not go to him*."

This absence of desires excludes even the desire of virtue. This is the last conclusion to which the saint had arrived a little before his death. He writes, on the 10th of August, 1619: "Say that you renounce all virtues, desiring only such as God will give you—*nor wishing to make any exertion to acquire them*, except as God will give them of his own good pleasure."

If the devotee's own will disappears at this point—what should take its place? The will of God, it would seem. But we must not forget that if such a miracle should take place, it must result in a state of unalterable peace, and constant

strength. By this evidence, and no other, could we recognise this state of perfection.

Madame Chantal betrays to us that the effect in her case was entirely different. Although the Sisterhood have ably arranged her life, and mutilated her letters, there remains enough to show in what a storm of passion she passed her days. Her entire life—a long life, occupied with engrossing cares, the details of foundation and administration—was not sufficient to calm her spirit. Time wore out and destroyed her body without changing or relieving the continual martyrdom which she endured within. She made this avowal in her last days: “All the pain which I have endured during my whole life, is not to be compared with the torment which I suffer now, being reduced to such a state that nothing can content me—nothing can give me any solace, except that one word—*death!*”

She needed not to have declared this—we could have discovered it without her admission. That exclusive culture of the sensibility—although there are some virtues which can make it noble—has the inevitable result of disturbing the soul, and rendering it feeble and suffering to the last degree. It is not with impunity that we can absorb, in love, the will which gives man strength, and the reason which gives him peace.

I have spoken elsewhere\* of the rare but beautiful examples which the middle ages give of religious dogmas which unite science and piety. Those who constructed them thus, had no fear of developing by them the reason and the will. Science, it has been objected, renders the soul inquiet, and, too curious. It removes us from God. They reason as if there could be truth which is not in him—as if the divine light reflected in science had not a soothing virtue—a power to calm the heart by communicating a knowledge of eternal truths, and of the indestructible laws which shall still remain, when worlds have passed away.

In all this whom shall I blame? Man? God forbid! It

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\* In a fragment upon the education of women in the middle ages, reprinted at the end of my Introduction to Universal History, third edition.

is the fault of *method* only. This method, which, when reduced to a system, was called QUIETISM, and which, as we shall presently see, is the general system of the direction of devotees\* is nothing else than the encouragement of our passiveness, and the development of our instinct for inertia. The result at last is the paralysis of the will, the prostration of what constitutes man.

St. Francis of Sales was one of the few who could revive a dead system. No person less than he, so true and pure, could have introduced his system at that epoch. He opened in the seventeenth century, the door to the *passive paths* of religious orders. In the dawn of the century, in the freshness of the morning, while the breeze comes from the Alps, we find Madame Chantal exhausted and stifling for breath. How then will it be in the evening?

The good, holy man, St. Francis, images himself, in one of his letters, as afloat on the lake of Geneva in a little barque, conducted by Providence. He is obedient "to the pilot who forbids him from rowing, and is perfectly at ease, though only three fingers width of board support him." The Age is embarked with him, and trusting his benevolent guide, he glides amid the rocks and shoals. The deep waters are those of *Quietism*; and if your eye is keen, in their transparent abyss you may already discern Molinos.†

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\* So inherent is this in *devout direction* that we find it even in the professed enemies of *Quietism*. Vide letters of Bousset to the religious orders under his direction.

† The principle is the same with St. Francis of Sales and all *Quietists*; the degree only differs. The principle is the overthrow—the annihilation of the will, set up as the *ideal of perfection*. St. Francis did not recommend this entire absence of desire as the *habitual* state of the soul; the others wish that this state which is that of perfection, should become *habitual* if possible (Fenelon)—or even *perpetual* (Molinos.) Bossuet sought and found in St. Francis, some passages contrary to his general doctrine, but they only prove that the saint is not consistent.

## CHAPTER III.

*Isolation of Women.*—"Devotion Aisée."—*Worldly Theology of the Jesuits and of Rome.*—"Management" of Women and Children.—*Thirty years War.*—*Gallant Devotion.*—*Devout Romances.*—*Casuists.*

WE have been speaking of a rare exception—of the life of a woman full of works, and doubly full—a saint and founder of a religious order, who had, before, filled the station of a wife, the mother of a family, and wise mistress of a household. The biographies of Madame de Chantal remark upon it as a singular circumstance, that she had, as wife and widow, herself managed her household, governed her dependents, and managed the fortune of her husband, her father, and her children.

This was, indeed, a rare circumstance at the time the biographies were written. The family tasks and domestic cares which we find throughout the sixteenth century, particularly in the houses of burgesses and citizens, was lost in the seventeenth, when every body wished to live in the style of nobles. Idleness became a fashion of the epoch from its circumstances. All society was inactive on the morrow after the religious wars; all local action had ceased, and the central life of courts had hardly commenced. The nobility had finished their adventures, and the sword was hanged against the wall. The citizens had no more *emeutes*, conspiracies, armed processions, nothing, in short, to do. The ennui of this inactivity of the times weighed most heavily upon woman. She found herself unoccupied and isolated. In the sixteenth century she was in communication with man by the great questions which were debated even in the family circle—by common perils, fears and hopes. In the seventeenth there was nothing of all this.



Add to the absence of these mutual emotions another great difficulty—and one, we may remark, from which there is grave and increasing danger in the times in which we live. It is, that in every profession the spirit of particularity and detail, which more and more absorbs man, has the effect of isolating him in the family, and of rendering him, in some sort, mute toward his wife and household. He can no more communicate to them his daily thoughts—they could comprehend nothing of the minute difficulties and technical problems which fill his mind.

But the woman had, at least, her children to console her? No! In the period of which we write, the house, silent and empty, resounded no more with the noise of the children. Education at home became the exception to the general rule—it gave way daily more and more to the system of education in institutions. The son was educated by the Jesuits, the daughter by the Ursulines, or some other religious order. The mother remained alone. The separation of the residence of the mother and child is an immense evil, which contains the germs of a thousand ills, in the family and in society. I shall return to this subject in another place.

And the mother and her children were not only separated, but by the influence of modes of life completely different, they became opposite in mind, and less and less capable of understanding each other—the son a little savant in *hic, hæc, hoc*, the mother ignorant and worldly. There was no longer a common language between them.

The family thus separated was the more open to the operation of influences from without. The mother and child, once separated, are the more easy to secure, and it is simply necessary to employ different means. The son is subdued and broken by the burthen of his tasks and studies. He must write, write, write, copy, copy, translate, imitate. The mother on the other hand, falls into the power of these intriguers by the dreary wearisomeness of vacuity and ennui. The

lady is alone in the chateau—her lord is at the chase, or at court. Monsieur, the President, goes daily to the hall in the morning, and returns in the evening—Madame, his wife, is alone in her melancholy hotel in the country, or in a gloomy great mansion in a dark little street in the city.

The lady in the sixteenth century, soothed her solitude by song—often by poetry. In the seventeenth, worldly songs were forbidden; and as for religious chants, they were still more out of the question. What! sing psalms! That were at once to declare one's-self a protestant. What remained for woman then? Nothing but *gallant devotion*—the conversation of the director or of the lover.

The sixteenth century, with its violent manners and fluctuating opinions, moved suddenly, by fits, from gallantry to devotion—from Heaven to Satan. It alternated continually and hastily between pleasure and penitence. In the seventeenth, people were more ingenious. They could carry forward the two things at once—mingle the two languages—and speak love and devotion together. Could you be a silent listener to a conversation conducted under these beautiful rules, it would sometimes puzzle you to decide who spoke—whether the lover or the spiritual director.

To understand the singular success of the latter, we must be careful to keep in mind the moral condition of the times. We must remember the unquiet and perplexed state of conscience in which the end of a period so stormy as that of the religious wars, found the world. In the gloomy idleness which commenced—in the vacancy of the present, the past came up more vividly, and its memories were of the more frequent recurrence. With many minds—with the feeble and agitated souls of women more especially, awoke the terrible question of safety or perdition.

All the success of the Jesuits—the confidence reposed in them by the noble and by the women, had its foundation in

the adroit reply which they contrived to this question. A few words then upon it is indispensable.

“What can save us?” The *theologian* on the one side, and the *jurist* or the philosopher on the other made opposite responses. The *theologian*, if he was truly such, as representing the largest part of Christendom, replied: “It is the grace of our Lord which takes the place of justice, and saves whom he will. Some are predestined to salvation—the larger number to condemnation.\*

The *jurists* on the other hand answered, that we are punished or recompensed according to the good or bad exercise of our own free will. We are dealt with according to our works, in conformity with justice.

Such is the interminable case between the jurist and the theologian—justice and predestination. Let one figure to himself a mountain with two sides, and the crest straight and sharp—the edge of a razor. On the one side is predestination, which condemns—on the other justice, which strikes, and on the summit, between these two terrors, is miserable man, with one foot on the one side, and the other on the opposite, ever ready to slip and fall.

And when could the fear of falling be greater, than after the great crimes of the sixteenth century; when man had found the weight of his sins so unwieldy that he could not keep his equilibrium? The fright and despair of Charles IX. after the massacre of St. Bartholomew are well known. He died—for the lack of a Jesuit confessor. John III. of Sweden, who killed his brother, did not die of remorse. His wife took care to bring to him the good Father Possevino, who whitewashed, and made him catholic.

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\* This was in different degrees the common reply of the defenders of the doctrine of grace, protestants, Jansenists, Thomists, etc. Put in contrast with these all the shades of the other party—the jurists of antiquity and the middle ages, the Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian heretics, and the modern philosophers.

The means which the Jesuits employ to tranquillize consciences, surprise one very much, at the first glance.\* They adopt—with address and management it is true, but they still adopt the principle of the jurists, to wit: *That man is saved or lost by his works—by the exercise which he makes of his free will.*

This seems a liberal but severe doctrine. You are free, and therefore responsible and punishable. If you sin, you must atone for it. The jurist, who never jests, would visit a serious punishment upon the person of the culprit. “Off with his head! The law will cure with the axe the malady of iniquity.”

But it is necessary that we go back and look up the Jesuit, whom we lost sight of in that last step.† Expiation, by the Jesuit’s code has nothing in it terrible. He will frequently prove forthwith, that there is nothing to expiate. The fault, properly explained, will become a merit, or at the worst, if the fault remain, it may be washed away by good works, the test of which is, the penitent’s devoting himself to the Jesuits, the ultramontane interest.

Do you perceive how much of exceeding cleverness there is in the tactics of the Jesuits? The doctrine of freedom of will, and of justice, which in the middle ages was denounced against the jurists as pagan and irreconcilable with Christianity, is adopted by the Jesuits. They put themselves forward as the friends and champions of the freedom of the will.

But this doctrine of free will, and of justice according to works, puts the sinner in a very embarrassing position. The Jesuit comes in at the point when he needs solace. He charges himself with the direction of this troublesome liberty, and reduces works to the capital good work of serving Rome. In

\* It is the eclectic effort of Molina. *Vide Concordia.*

† Though the jurist and Jesuit hold analagous theories, they differ in practice. The jurist demands punishment—the Jesuit suppresses it by penitence. See the true decoy—the little fish thrown to catch a greater, according to the expressive emblem: *Imago primi sæculi Societatis Jesu.*



this manner the liberty of the will, theoretically professed, is turned, in practice, to the support of the power of the Jesuits.

There is here a double falsehood. These people, who style themselves *Jesuits*—men of Jesus—teach that man is saved less by Jesus than by himself—his own freedom of will. These then, are the philosophers—the friends of liberty! On the contrary, they are the most cruel enemies of liberty and of philosophy. That is to say, with the words “free will,” they juggle away the name of the Saviour, only to conceal with his name, again, the liberty which they had just put forward.

The matter is thus simplified from the two opposite parties, into a sort of tacit bargain between Rome, the Jesuits, and the world.

Rome surrendered Christianity—in the principle which lies at the foundation of it—salvation by Christ. Placed in a position to choose between that doctrine and its opposite, she had not courage to decide.\*

After Christianity, the Jesuits surrendered morality—reducing the moral merits by which man works out his salvation to a single one—the political merit, of which we have before spoken—that of service to Rome.

And in return, what does the world surrender?

Woman, the part of the world eminently worldly, surrenders her family and her fire-side—her most precious possessions. Eve still betrays Adam; the woman betrays man, her husband, her son! Thus each sells her deity.—Rome sells Christianity, woman her domestic religion.

The feeble souls of women, incurably spoiled by the great corruption of the sixteenth century,—full of passions and of fear, and of bad desires crossed by remorse—eagerly seized this means of sinning with a quiet conscience, and of expiation without amendment, amelioration, or return towards God.

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\* The Jesuits obtained a decree of silence upon both parties—Rome directed Molina and St. Thomas to hold their peace.

They were happy to receive at the confessional a political order, or the direction of an intrigue as works of penitence. They carried into this singular mode of expiation, the violence of the same guilty passions which they were labouring to expiate; and, to atone for remaining in sin, were often guilty of crimes.\*

The female mind, inconstant in all things else, was in this sustained by the manly firmness of the mysterious hand which was concealed behind her. Under this hidden guidance woman, at once gentle and strong, impetuous and persevering, immovable as iron, and melting like fire, compelled at length the surrender of character, and even interest.

Some examples may assist us to understand this. In France the aged Les Diguieres had a great political interest in remaining a protestant, inasmuch as he was the chief of his party. King, rather than governor of Dauphiny, he gave assistance to the Swiss, and protected the Vaudois population against the house of Savoy. But the daughter of Les Diguieres was gained over by Father Cotton. She managed her father skilfully and patiently, and succeeded in inducing him to abandon his powerful position for an empty compliment, and to change his religion for the title of constable.

In Germany the interest and the mild character of the emperor, Ferdinand I., induced him to pursue a moderate policy, and not to submit himself to his nephew, Philip II. In violence and fanaticism he could only have taken a second place. But the daughter of the emperor managed so effectively that the house of Austria was united by marriage with those of Lorraine and of Bavaria. The children of those two houses were educated by the Jesuits,† and in Germany the Jesuits thus renewed

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\* See, in Leger, the vast system of espionage, of intrigue, and of secret persecution, which ladies of high rank in Piedmont and France organized under the direction of the Jesuits.

† Vide Ranke, History of the Popes; Dorigny Life of P. Canisius, and above all, P. P. Wolf, *Geschichte Maximilians*.

the broken thread of the destiny of the Guises. These pupils of the order were better for the purposes of their masters than the Guises—they were blind instruments in the hands of their teachers; labourers in diplomacy, and in war—skillful most certainly, but still mere labourers. I speak of the next stern and bigoted generation: of Ferdinand II. of Austria, Tilly, Maximilian of Bavaria, those conscientious performers of the great works of Rome, who, under the direction of their Jesuit masters, conducted so long, in Europe, a war barbarous and skilful—merciless and methodical. The Jesuits both prompted and overlooked them. Over the ruins of cities in ashes—over fields covered with the dead, the mule of the Jesuit ambled at the side of the charger of the conqueror in thirty-six battles—the bloody victor of Magdeburg—the monk in military command, John Tzerklas, count of Tilly.

The horror of that villainous war, the basest that ever was waged, is that a free purpose, or a spontaneous act among those who waged it, scarcely appears in its history. From its commencement it was artificial and mechanical\* like a combat of machines or of phantoms. These strange beings, created only to fight their way, marched without mercy, and with no purpose of their own. What understanding could be had with them? By what word could they be addressed? What consideration could soften them to humanity? In the religious wars of France, and in that of the revolution, the warriors were men. Each died for his opinion—his idea—and falling on the field of battle wrapped his faith about him as he composed himself to die. But the soldiers of the thirty years war had no personal identity—no thought of their own—their very breath was that of the evil genius who pushed them on. These automata—however blind—were not the less bloody. No historian would be able to comprehend this atrocious pheno-

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\* Excepting, always, the electrical moment of Gustavus Adolphus.

menon, if there remained not some image of it in the accursed pictures of that hireling, Salvator.\*

Such, then, were the fruits of the mildness, benignity, and fatherly love of the Jesuits. Having now, through indulgence and connivance exterminated morality—having entrapped the family, fascinated the mother, and conquered the child—having by Satanic art educated the *man-machine*, they discovered that they had created a monster, whose one idea, whole life, thought, action, was *murder*, and nothing else.

Wise politicians—amiable men—worthy fathers—who, with so much wisdom, arranged from afar the thirty years war:† fascinating Aquiviva, wise Canisius, good Posserino, friend of St. Francis, who does not admire the versatility of your intellect? Even while organizing the terrible intrigue of that long St. Bartholomew, you discussed with the good St. Francis the differences it is necessary to observe between “those who die *in love*, and those who die *of love*.”

From these gentle theories to those atrocious results, what was the path? How did minds, enervated by gallant devotion and devout gallantry, spoiled by the daily indulgences of an obliging caspistry, permit themselves to be led, asleep, into the current of politics?‡ The answer to this question would in-

\* The expression is harsh, and it pains me that I must employ it. If this great artist painted war so cruel, it is doubtless because he had more sensibility than his contemporaries to the horrors of this terrible epoch.

† See, particularly in Ranke, how Aquaviva corrupted the mind of the young Maximilian of Bavaria, who was to play so great a part in that war.

‡ Can the astonishing success which, at the very outset, they met in this great enterprise, be explained by attributing genius to the Jesuits? I think not. The spirit of intrigue—a certain diplomatic cunning, patient and tricky—is *this* genius? The celebrated Jesuits of this time, those who had most success and efficiency, were, (if we judge them by what works of theirs are extant) insipid writers, stupid pedants, or grotesque wits. M. Ranke, with his benevolent impartiality, while enumerating the heroes of both parties in the great combat of the human mind, wished to find a great name to set against Shakspeare. He sought and found—*Jacob Balde*.



volve a long history. It would require one to bury himself in all the dust of a nauseating literature. Who could do this without heart-sickness?

All prepared, as the world undoubtedly was, by bad manners and bad taste for the heavy productions with which the Jesuits inundated it, the insipid and washy flood would have passed away without leaving any traces, if there had not been mingled with it something of the amiable original who enchanted all hearts. The charm of St. Francis of Sales, his beautiful spiritual union with Madame de Chantal, the holy and sweet fascination which he possessed over women and children, all helped the great religious intrigue in an indirect but very efficacious manner.

With their light morality, and absolution abating even that, the Jesuits could easily corrupt consciences, but not remove all fears. They could play more or less cleverly upon the rich instrument which their institution allowed them—falsehood. They could play science, art, literature, theology; but could they with all these false touches, sound one true tone? No!

The tone exact and sweet was precisely what St. Francis gave them. They had only to follow him to make their false tones seem a little less discordant. The amiable features of his works, their pretty faults, were adroitly copied. That taste for lowliness and humility, which made him regard with preference the lesser things of creation—little children, little birds, little lambs and bees—authorized among the Jesuits trifles, petty exactness, and shallowness of style, and little weaknesses of the heart. The innocent freedoms of an angel, pure as the light, who always exhibited the Deity in his gentler revelation—in woman, in the nursing babe, in the Divine mysteries of love—these emboldened his imitators in the most scandalous equivokes; and made them advance so far in this doubtful path, that the line became insensible between gallantry and devotion—between the lover and the spiritual father.

The friend of St. Francis, the good bishop Camus, with all

his little romances, much aided this result. He has only pious shepherdesses, a devout Astrea, an ecclesiastical Amyntus.\* Conversion sanctifies all, I know, in a romance. The lovers always land at last in the convent or the seminary; but they travelled by so long a circuit, that it made them doze by the way.

The taste for romantic† and insipid, of the benign and fatherly description was thus easily spread by the perversion of comparatively good examples. The innocent are found to have laboured for the artful. A St. Francis and a Camus opened the way for Father Douillet.

The essential policy of the Jesuits was to weaken and diminish; to render the mind feeble and false; to make the little very little, and reduce the simple into idiots. The soul fed with trifles, and amused with baubles, would become easy to direct. The emblems, conceits, and moral quibbles, with which the Jesuits amused themselves, were very suitable to their policy. Among the nonsensical emblems there was one in particular which few foolish books could rival—the “*Imago primi sæculi societatis Jesu.*”

All these little follies succeeded to a marvel among the indolent and listless women, whose minds had been enervated for a long period, by gallantry without ideas. To please such in all times two things are necessary: first to amuse them, and partake of their taste for the small, the romantic and the false;

\* In his Alexis, Camus excuses himself for writing such works. He wrote them to push aside worldly romances. He has “done as does the nurse, who takes medicine for the benefit of the child.” The exemplar of the library of the arsenal is curious for his manuscript notes.

† As for the taste for the romantic, that would appear not to have become extinct now. The last editor of the Works of St. Francis, wished to have, to write the History of the Saint and of Madame de Chantal, “the pen which tracked the death of Atala, and the chaste amours of Cymodocus.”—Vol. I., p. 243, of the edition dedicated to Monseigneur the archbishop of Paris. The very ideal of folly of this description is the Life of the Virgin, by the Abbe Orsini.

and, second, to flatter them, and indulge them in their feebleness; to encourage them to make themselves more feeble and effeminate—more feminine than they are.

Such is the universal mode of corrupting woman. How does the lover supplant the husband? It is usually less by passion than by assiduity and complaisance, by flattering the imagination. The director employed no other means: he beguiled by flattery, with the more success, because, from his character and cloth, some austerity might be expected. But what prevents that one director should flatter more than another? We have just now seen a highly respectable example of spiritual infidelity.\* From one confessor to another and another, each more complaisant than the last, we run some risk of falling to quite a depth. To get the better of confessors so accommodating, an entirely new degree of tenderness and laxity becomes necessary. The last comer, unable otherwise to exceed his predecessors, actually turns the tables. He who was the judge of the tribunal of penitence, becomes the suppliant. Justice makes an apology to the sinner—God is humbled before him!†

The Jesuits, who by these means shone so much as directors, themselves render the testimony that in this kind of contest they had no person to fear. In kind indulgence, in disguised connivance, in subtilty to betray and misrepresent the Deity, they knew perfectly well that no one could compete with a Jesuit director. Father Cotton had so little fear that

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\* See, upon this subject; the singular simplicity of the Jesuit Fichet, who speaks in his biography with contempt of the first director or confessor of Madame Chantal, who was *too jealous of her*. He even goes so far as to call him "*This swain*," &c.—[Note by Translator.—The reader will find this passage a key to the mode in which St. Francis supplanted his predecessor, with Madame Chantal, in chapter II. "Spiritual infidelity" means betrayal of confidence between the confessor and his penitent, and in the very peculiar description which our author gives of the relation between the two, it gives rise to "spiritual jealousy."

† In the French—"Dieu se mette a genoux!"

his penitents would desert him, that, on the contrary, he sometimes counselled them to go to other confessors. "Go! Go!" he would say; "Try some one else, and you will, without a doubt, come back to me again!"

Let one imagine to himself this general emulation between confessors, directors, and consulting casuists, to justify every body, and to find continually some adroit means to go farther in indulgence, and to make some new case innocent which had before been deemed culpable. The result of that war against sin, pushed to emulation by so many wise men, was that it disappeared gradually from human conduct. Guilt could find no place of refuge—and, under such a course of spiritual direction, it seemed as if one day there would be no more of it left in the world.

That great work, Pascal's Provincial Letters, with all its felicity of method, leaves us still something to regret. In giving its concordance of the casuists, it presents them in some sort as in the same line—as contemporaries. It would have been well, on the contrary, to have affixed dates; to have rendered to each according to his merit in the progressive development of casuistry, and to have shown how they went on perfecting the science; outbidding and surpassing each other, excelling and eclipsing themselves.

In so eager a competition, it was highly indispensable to make great effort, and exercise continual ingenuity. The penitent, having his election of confessors, became difficult to please. Each successive day absolution could be had at a better market, and the confessor who knew not how to abate, lost his practice. It was the business of the clever priest to discover, in present concessions, how much more could yet be conceded. A beautifully elastic and accommodating science was this casuistry. In the place of imposing rules, it proportioned itself to the occasion; becoming narrow or large as it took measure of the exigency. Each step of progress was



carefully noted, and served as a point of departure for a still further extension.

In a country once become subject to fever, disease engenders disease. The sickly inhabitants neglecting all precautions, filth accumulates on filth, waters spread over the low grounds, miasma thickens the air—an atmosphere, sluggish, noxious, and heavy, oppresses the country. The people drag themselves along almost inanimate, or lounge and doze continually. Speak not to them of making any attempt to improve their condition. They are habituated to the malady, and have been from their birth, and so were their fathers before them. Why talk of remedies? The state of the country is that in which it has been from time immemorial. It would be almost a pity, according to their opinion, to change it.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Convents.—Quarter of the Convents.—Convents of the Seventeenth Century.—Contrast of the Middle Ages.—The Director.—Disputes to obtain the Direction of Religious Orders.—The Jesuits conquer by Calumny.*

A NAIVE and witty German lady related to me a little adventure which befel her when she had just arrived at Paris for the first time. She wandered with her husband for a long time in a large and gloomy quarter of the city, where they made an infinity of turns and circuits before they were able to find their way out. Entering at first a public garden, they at length found another which led them to the quay. I perceived that she was speaking of the learned and pious quarter, extending from the Luxembourg to the Jardin des Plantes, which contains so many convents and colleges.

“I saw,” said this lady, “entire streets of gardens, surrounded with high walls, which recalled the deserted quarters of Rome, in the season of the malaria; but with this difference, that these were not deserted, but mysteriously inhabited, close, jealous, and inhospitable. Other very gloomy streets seemed, as it were, buried between two rows of tall gray mansions, which did not look upon the street, but, as if in mockery, had walled up apertures for windows, or *jalousies* closed or reversed, which seemed windows, and still were not. We inquired our way many times, and were often told, but I know not how, after going up and down, and up again, we were still at the same point; our weariness and fatigue increasing. We found continually, as if by invincible fate, the same gloomy streets, and the same sombre houses sullenly closed, which seemed to lower at us with a suspicious eye. Worn out at at length, and seeing no end or outlet, weighed down more

and more by, I know not what ennui, which the very walls seemed to breathe, I sat down upon a stone and wept."

The mind is enfeebled, wearied, and the heart sickened by merely looking at these ungracious buildings; the most cheerful of which are the hospitals. Built, for the most part, or rebuilt in the seventeenth century, during the solemn dullness of the times of Louis XII. and XIV., they have nothing about them which recalls the gracious style of art of the Renaissance, the lost souvenir of which is the Florentine façade of the Luxembourg. All the buildings which were erected at a later date, (even those which affect a style of severe ornament, like the Sorbonne,) have sometimes magnitude, but never grandeur. With their high pointed roofs, their formal and rigid lines, they have always the dry, dull, and monotonous air of the priest, or the old maid. In this indication they are far from falsifying their character or history; having been, for the most part, built to shelter crowds of the daughters of the nobility and of citizens who lived like nobles—fathers who wished thus to disembarass themselves. To make one son rich, they sent the daughters here to die sadly and decently.

The monuments of the middle ages are melancholy, but not displeasing. One feels, in regarding them, the force of the sincerity of the sentiment which led to their erection. They are not monuments of officials, but the living works of the people, the children of the faith. But these, on the contrary, of which we now speak, are quite another thing—the creation of a class—the aristocratic class, which was increased in the seventeenth century by the royal households, the antichamber, and the bureaux. They were almshouses, opened to the daughters of those families. Their great number is calculated to mislead the observer as to the strength and extent of the religious reaction of that period. Regard them attentively, and tell me if you see in them the least trace of the ancient ascetism. Are these buildings religious houses, or hospitals? Are they asylums or colleges? There is nothing to indicate the

answer. They are perfectly calculated for many civil purposes. They have only one character well determined—that of sombre uniformity, decent mediocrity—ennui. It is ennui realised under an architectural form—palpable, tangible and visible.

What endlessly multiplied these houses, was the circumstance that, the austerities of the ancient rules being very much softened in them, parents had less hesitation in compelling their daughters to take the veil. It was no more burying them alive. The parlours were the saloons to which all the world flocked, under pretence of edification. The belles who came there to make confidants of the sisters, occupied their minds with intrigues and the bustling trickery of the world without, tormenting the recluses with vain regrets. With these worldly distractions, the interior of the convent was only the more gloomy. Life, with very little monastic austerity, and a few little acts of devotion to occupy the time, became an idle and wearisome void.

The monastic life was, in the middle ages, something more serious. Then the convent had both more death and more life. The system was founded on two principles, both followed to the letter—the death of the body, and the vivification of the soul. Against the body they employed depressing fasts, long vigils, and frequent bleeding. For the development of the mind, monks and nuns could read, transcribe,\* and chant. Down to the eleventh century they comprehended the words that they chanted, the Latin differing little from that of their

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\* The rule of St. Césaire, and of others, directed nuns to copy manuscripts. (See my *Memoir on the Education of Women in the Middle Ages*, at the end of the *Introduction to Universal History*, third edition.) Many of the beautiful miniatures which ornament them, painted by love, and with infinite patience, betray the hand of woman. Who could believe that it is now a crime for a nun to know how to design, or to collect flowers to paint? We have learned the fact, with many other curious things respecting the interior of convents, by the revelations of Sister Marie Lemonnier—*Memoire de Maitre Tiliard*, 1845. Caen.



ordinary conversation. The offices had then a dramatic character which sustained the attention, and kept it awake. Many passages, now reduced to simple words, were then expressed by gesture and pantomime. What they *say* now, they then *acted*.\* Even after they had given to their worship the serious, sombre, and wearisome character which it preserves to the present day, the religious orders had still an indemnification in pious reading—legends, the lives of the saints, and other books which they translated—as, for instance, the admirable French version of the Imitation of Christ.† All these consolations were withdrawn to the sixteenth century. It was feared they would become too studious. The chant, even, in the seventeenth, appeared suspicious to many of the confessors. They feared that the sisterhood had not sufficiently devoted themselves to be fit to sing the praises of God.‡

And how was all the lack replaced? For the offices which they no longer understood—for the reading and the chanting which had been forbidden, for all these indulgences and occupations of which they had been successively deprived, what thing did they substitute?

A thing—or rather a man—in plain language, THE DIRECTOR. This was something new, and little known in the middle ages, when they had only the confessor.

Yes—it was a man who inherited all this great vacancy—it was his conversation and his precepts which were expected to fill it. Prayer and reading, if the latter was permitted, were performed entirely by him, or under his direction. God, whom they had sought in their reading, and by their sighs was henceforth to be daily dispensed to them by this man—measured to them according to the measure of his heart.

Many thoughts press upon us here—but they must be delayed. We will listen to them presently; to entertain them now would break the thread of historical deduction.

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\* Vide my *Origines du Droit*. D. Martene. *De Ritibus*, &c.

† History of France, vol. v.

‡ Châteaubriand, *Vie de Rancé*.

In the commencement of the devout reaction of 1600, nuns were generally under the direction of monks of their own order. The Feuillantines were directed by the Feuillants; the Carmelites by Carmelite friars; the order of St. Elisabeth, by the order of Picpus. The Capuchin nuns were not only confessed and directed by Capuchins, but supported by them, out of the product of their collections.\*

The monks did not retain this exclusive possession. During more than a quarter of a century, priests, and monks, the religious of all robes,† had, among themselves, an active war upon this subject. This mysterious kingdom of women, shut up and dependent, over which they might exercise an undivided dominion, formed not without reason, the common ambition of all. Such houses, although in appearance unaffected by the world, and strangers to it, are not the less, always great centres of action. They conferred great power upon the orders which obtained possession of them, and with individuals, priests, or friars, whether they admit it or not, it was an affair of the heart.

What I say here, I say of the most pure and the most rigid, who are often the most susceptible. The honorable attachment of Cardinal Berulle for the Carmelite nuns whom he had introduced into France, was known to all the world. He had them established near him, he went to them at all hours in the day, and even in the evening—the Jesuits said *the night*. It was near them, when sick, that he went to re-establish his health. When Paris was scourged by the plague, he said that he could not go to a distance “on account of his Carmelites.”

\* Vide Heliot. For Paris, especially, see Felibren, who is very complete on this subject.

† Men, high in authority, or in position, took portions of the vows of religious orders—particularly that of the Jesuits. They still remained in the world, but were bound to support their order, were not forbidden to marry, &c. They were said to belong to “the robe.” Madame Chantal’s father was one of these.—*Trans.*

The Orders of the Oratory and of the Jesuits, natural enemies, made common cause of the enterprise of driving the Carmelite friars from the direction of the Carmelite sisterhood. When they had succeeded, they then commenced to quarrel between themselves.

The austere sisterhood of the Carmelites, which obtained little extension among us, had, however, importance, as embodying the ideal of penitence and the poetry of the monastic life; the enthusiastic spirit of St. Theresa dwelt still among them. It was into the bosom of this order that the subjects of sudden and violent conversions threw themselves; here those came to die, who, like Madame de Vallière, too severely wounded in spirit, could find relief only in death.

But the two great institutions of the era, those which represented its spirit, and obtained an immense extension, were the orders of the Visitation, and the Ursulines. The first had, in the reign of Louis XIV. about five hundred monasteries, the second, three or four hundred.

The Visitandines, as we have already said, were the most gentle of the orders. Inactively they waited the visit of the Divine Spouse. Their inactive life was well fitted to make them visionaries. The astonishing success of Maria Alacoque is well known, and how well it was turned to profit by the Jesuits.

The Ursulines, more useful, devoted themselves to instruction. The three hundred and fifty convents which they had in this age, educated, following the most moderate calculation, thirty-five thousand girls. What great political instrument is such a vast institution capable of being made, in able hands!

The Ursulines and Visitandines were under the charge of bishops who gave them confessors. St. Francis, good friend as he was of the Jesuits and of the orders in general, was a suspicious monster in their eyes in the matter which he had nearest at heart, the Order of the Visitation. "Methinks" the

saint writes,\* "that these good girls know not what they wish, if they would invite the supervision and direction of the religious orders. In truth these orders are made up of excellent servants of God, but it is always a hard thing for the sisterhood to be governed by the orders, who *have a custom of depriving them of the holy liberty of the spirit.*"

It is only too easy to discern how servilely the female orders reproduced the spirit of the men who directed them. Those who were governed by the monks had a character of devotion, bizarre, eccentric and violent; under the secular priests, oratorians, doctrinaires, there was a little reason, and a little narrow wisdom, mediocre, dry and sterile.

The nuns who received bishops as their ordinary confessors chose themselves a confessor extraordinary, who did not fail to supplant the other and annul his influence. This extraordinary was generally found to be a Jesuit. The new orders of the Visitandines and Ursulines, created by priests who had endeavoured to drive the monks away from their direction, fell not the less under the influences of the Jesuits. The priests founded—the Jesuits profited by it.

Nothing better served the purposes of the Jesuits than to say and repeat that the government of the female orders was a thing denied to them by their severe founder. Of monasteries in general this was true, but of nunneries in particular, or their separate direction, it was false. The Jesuits did not govern the institutions collectively, they directed the sisters one by one.

The Jesuit had not the daily weariness of detail, the management of the spiritual household, and the small trash of little sins. He did not fatigue himself with stated duties, but came in upon occasion. He was, above all, useful in giving the nuns dispensation from telling their confessors what they wished to

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\* Works, Vol. XI., p. 120, edition 1833.



conceal, until, by little and little, the latter became a species of husband, held in small respect.

If by chance the confessor possessed firmness of character and ability to exercise an influence, they laboured to expel him by the force of calumnies. One may judge of their audacity in this respect, when they feared not to attack a man so well established as Cardinal Berulle. One of his connexions among the Carmelite nuns, in a convent in which he had never set his foot, having become enciente, they boldly accused him of it. Finding that no person believed them, and that they gained nothing by attacking him on the score of morals, they set themselves about barking in concert against his books. There, they said, was concealed the poison of a dangerous mysticism. The Cardinal was too tender, too indulgent, too gentle, both as a theologian and *as a director*. Prodigious effrontery! when all the world knew and saw what manner of directors the Jesuits were.

This succeeded at length, if not against Berulle, at least against the Order of the Oratory, which was disgusted and frightened from the direction of nunneries, and finally desisted from it. This is a remarkable example of the all-powerful strength of calumny, when it is organized on a grand scale, by a body pushing together, and saying and repeating it in chorus. A chorus of thirty thousand men, repeating daily the same things throughout the whole Christian world—what could resist it? It was the refinement of Jesuitical art, and they have been incomparable at it. It might have been said in reference to them, almost from their origin, as Virgil addresses his Roman in the well-known passage: *Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra*—"Others animate brass, and give life to marble, they excel in other arts. Thou, Jesuit, let us remember, thy art is calumny!"

## CHAPTER V.

*Reaction of Morals.—Arnaud, 1643.—Pascal, 1657.—Disgrace of the Order of the Jesuits.—How they re-established themselves with the King and the Pope, and put their Enemies to Silence.—Discouragement of the Jesuits.—Their Corruption.—They Protect the first Quietists.—Immortality of Quietism.—Desmarests of St. Sorlin.—Morin burned, 1663.*

MORALITY was diseased—but not dead. Wasted by the casuists, by Jesuitism, and by the intrigues of the clergy, it was saved by the seculars. Such was the change which this point presents. The priesthood, even the better members of it, like the cardinal Berulle, plunged into the world and into politics. The illustrious laymen, Descartes, Poussin, retired into solitude. Philosophers became monks, and saints men of business.

Each could have what he wished in that age. The priests desired power, and succeeded in obtaining the expulsion of the Protestants, the proscription of the Jansenists, the submission of the Gallicans to the Pope. The secular would have science, Descartes and Galileo gave it impulse, Leibnitz and Newton, harmony. The church prevailed in temporal matters, the laity obtained power over the mind.

From the solitude where our great lay monks had taken refuge, comes a breath more pure. As it is felt, a new era commences, the modern—the era of labour, after that of disputes. No more dreams—no more school-divinity! It was necessary to set seriously and early to work—before the day. There might have seemed a little dullness—but no matter—it was the vivifying freshness of the dawn—as in the fine nights of the North, where a queen of twenty went to Descartes, at four in the morning, to learn the application of Geometry and Algebra.

The elevated and serious spirit which renewed philosophy and modified literature, could not be without its influence on theology. It found a point of support, small, at first, and almost imperceptible, in the re-union of friends at Port Royal. It gave dignity to that brotherhood. Morality there had her claims admitted—Religion again became herself.

Every thing prospered with the Jesuits. The confessors of kings, nobles, and courtly ladies, they found their convenient system of morality every where flourishing, when, in that serene sky, the thunder-cloud burst and the bolt fell. I speak of Arnaud's book—so entirely unexpected, so overwhelming—*The Frequent Communion*, 1643.

Not the Jesuits and Jesuitism alone, but every thing which enervated religion by a soft indulgence, felt the blow. Christianity re-appeared, austere and grave. The world looked with astonishment upon the pale countenance of the CRUCIFIED. He returned to say, in the name of grace, what natural reason alike says—that there is no real expiation without repentance. Before this severe truth, what becomes of all the little arts of evasion? What becomes of worldly devotions and romantic piety—all the Philotheas, Erotheas, and their imitations? Contrast made them appear disgusting—odious.

Others have said, and will say all this much better. I write not the history of Jansenism. The theological question is now superannuated. The moral question still exists, and history owes it a word; it cannot remain impartial between honest and dishonest people. Whether the Jansenist party may have exaggerated the doctrine of Grace or not, we must call that party, as it deserves to be considered in that deep struggle, the virtuous party.

Although Arnaud and Pascal may have gone too far against their adversaries, it would be easy to show that they stopped on this side of their object; they were unwilling to use all their arms; they dreaded, in attacking the Jesuitical direction on

certain delicate points, to injure the direction and confession generally.

The Jesuit Ferrier even owns that after the terrible blow of the Provincial Letters, the Jesuits were crushed, that they fell into derision and contempt. A crowd of bishops condemned, not one defended them.

One of the means that they employed to plaster over their difficulty was, to say boldly that the opinions they were reproached with, were not those of the society, but of some individuals. They were answered that all their books being examined by the General of the order, thus belonged to the entire society. No matter; to deceive the simple, they caused some of the Jesuits to write against their own doctrine. A Spanish Jesuit wrote against ultramontaniam — another, Father Gonzales, made a book against the casuists. The latter was very serviceable. When, finally, Rome was ashamed of their doctrine, and disavowed them, they put Gonzales forward, printed his book, and begged him to be their General. Even now, it is this book, this name, that they oppose to us. Thus they have an answer to all. Do you love indulgence, take Escobar; if you prefer severity take Gonzales.

Let us see what resulted from the universal contempt into which they fell after the publication of the Provincial Letters. The public conscience having been so thoroughly alarmed, every body, probably, avoided their confessional, and deserted their colleges. Think you so? You deceive yourself.

They were too necessary to the corruption of the times. But for the Jesuits, how could the king continue his devotions while notorious for his double adultery throughout Europe? Fathers Ferrier, Canard,\* and La Chaise remained in place to the end, like pieces of furniture, too convenient to be parted with.

But did not Rome feel how much she was compromised by

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\* He called himself by his Latin name, Annat.



such auxiliaries. Was there not an urgent desire on her part to separate herself? The velleity was not wanting perhaps;\* such a faint disposition was shown by the pope's condemning the apology which the Jesuits had ventured to make for the casuists. But all the energy of Rome was exhausted at this point; or, if any remained, it was directed against the enemies of the Jesuits. The Order of Jesus prevailed over their adversaries. As they had procured, in the commencement of the century, the imposition of silence upon the doctrine of Grace, defended by the Dominicans, so now again in the middle, they procured a similar command when the doctrine of Grace began to be heard through the Jansenists.

For this silence, twice imposed at their bidding, the Jesuits recompensed Rome by carrying still higher the doctrine of the papal infallibility. Upon this tottering Babel they dared still to build, and elevated it two stages. First, through the controversial works of the Jesuit Bellarmin, they stated and defended the dogma of the infallibility of the pope as a *matter of faith*. Secondly, the danger having become imminent, they ventured upon a step foolish and bold, though it gained them Rome. This was to cause the pope to do in his decrepitude what he had never dared to do in his power—to claim infallibility for himself in *questions of fact*.

And this was done, too, at a moment when Rome was compelled to acknowledge that she had erred upon the greatest facts of nature and of history. To say nothing of the new world, the existence of which she had denied, but could not very well avoid admitting, she first condemned Galileo, then submitted to his theory, adopted and taught it. The penance which she compelled him to do one day before her, she her-

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\* “The wishing of a thing is not properly the willing of it; but it is that which is called by the schools an imperfect *velleity*, and imports no more than an idle, inoperative complacency in, and desire of, the end, without any consideration of the means.”—*South*.

self was compelled to do before him, two hundred years afterward.\*

There is still another fact, in one sense more serious than those we have cited. The fundamental right of the popes, their title to power, the famous decretals, which they cited and defended so long as the critic, not having yet the aid of the printing press, could not expose them—those very decretals the pope has been obliged to confess, are a falsehood and a forgery !†

What! After the papacy has *lied upon the fundamental fact* of the foundation on which it rests its right, and has recanted and confessed the falsehood, then the Jesuits claim for it infallibility in *questions of fact!*

The Jesuits have been the tempters and corrupters of popes as well as of kings. Kings they betrayed by their concupiscence, popes through their pride.

What a ridiculous, yet affecting spectacle was it to see that poor little Jansenist party, then so great in genius and courage,‡ persist in making an appeal to the *justice* of Rome—kneeling to a judge sold to their enemies !§

\* The Jesuits will answer that these are sciences of matter, and that they are spiritual men. To which I answer, that he who cannot decide upon the natural, has no right to distinguish it from the supernatural, or to decide between them.

† By the organ of the two cardinals and librarians of the Vatican, Bellarmine and Baronius, one of whom was confessor to the pope.

‡ Who can see without emotion, the tragic portrait of one of the Arnauds at the Louvre? That white face so pure, so austere, that transparent lamp of alabaster, where radiates the internal flame, the light of mercy—the fire also of the combat! But how can we blame them for that, persecuted as they were, surrendered to those whom every body despised? Virtue and genius oppressed by cunning! I never go to the museum without also looking at the touching painting of the young nun of Port Royal, saved by a prayer. Ah! these girls were saints, it must be said, whether or not we love their spirit of resistance; saints and more. They were, under the forms of that time, the real defenders of liberty.

§ Read, however, the immortal fifth letter of Nicole, (*Imaginaires et Visionnaires*, I. 140,) as eloquent as the *Provinciales* and still more bold.

The Jesuits were not so blind that they did not see that the papacy, foolishly raised by them in theology, fell wretchedly in the political world. At the beginning of the century the pope was still powerful; he gave the whip to Henry IV. over the back of the cardinal D'Ossat. In the middle of the century, after all the great effort of the "thirty years war," the pope was not even consulted at the treaty of Westphalia. At the treaty of the Pyrenees, between Catholic Spain and most Christian France, they forgot that the pope was even in existence.

The Jesuits had undertaken the thing impossible; and the principal means that they employed, the forestalling of future generations was not less impossible. Upon this had rested their greatest effort; they succeeded in getting into their hands the most of the children of the noble and wealthy families; they made of education a machine to cramp the head and depress the mind. But such was the vigour of modern genius that, with the system the most happily combined to stifle invention, the first generation brought forth Descartes, the second, the author of "*The Hypocrite*," and the third, Voltaire.

The worst was, that by the light of that great modern torch which they could not extinguish, they saw each other. They knew each other, and consequently began to despise each other. There is no person so hardened in falsehood, that he can *entirely* deceive himself. They had to confess to one another that their *probabilisme* was, in reality, only the doubt and absence of all principle. They could not help discovering that they, the Christians *par excellence*, the champions of the faith were only skeptics. Of what faith were they the champions? It was certainly not the Christian faith; their whole theology tended to nothing less than to ruin the basis upon which Christianity rests—Grace and gratuitous salvation by the blood of Christ.

Were they champions of a principle? No—but agents of

an enterprise—charged with an undertaking—an impossible undertaking—the restoration of papacy.

Some Jesuits, but in small number, resolved to seek a restoration among themselves from their degradation. They frankly confessed the urgent necessity of reform in their society. Their general, a German, dared even to attempt this reform. Evil befel him for it; the great majority of the Jesuits wished to maintain their abuses—and they stripped him of all authority.\*

These good workmen who had laboured so well to justify the pleasures of others wished also their share of enjoyment. They appropriated to themselves for a General, a man according to their own heart—amiable, mild and companionable—the epicurean Oliva. Rome, lately governed by Madame Olympia, was in a moment of indulgence. Oliva retired to a delicious villa—made *business to-morrow*, his motto—and left the society to govern itself in its own way.

Some became merchants, bankers, woollen manufacturers, to the profit of their houses. Others following the pope's example more closely, worked for their nephews, and promoted the business of their families. Those who had wit, ran about the bye-streets coquetting and making madrigals. Others amused themselves with the gossipings of the nuns, the small talk of the women, and sensual curiosity. Their regents at last, to whom the world of woman was debarred, became too often mere Thyrsises and Corydons of the college. The consequence was a frightful prosecution† in Germany, in which a large number of the proud and grave Germanic houses were sullied.

The Jesuits, sunk so low both for their theology and practices, increased their party at hazard, with the most strange auxiliaries. Every one who declared himself an enemy of the

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\* This episode in the history of the Jesuits, very much obscured by them, has been cleared up by Ranké, from the manuscripts.

† Reprinted in 1843, but in a small number. M. Nodier gave me this rarity, very curious. I cannot now find it.



Jansenists became their friend. Here burst forth the immoral inconsistency of the society, its perfect indifference between systems. These people, who for more than half a century had contended for free-will, hastily allied themselves to the mystics who lost all liberty in God. Yesterday they were reproached for following the principle of the pagan philosophers and jurisconsults, which gives every thing to justice, nothing to grace, to love; and now they are receiving with kindness the growing Quietism—embracing the preacher of love, the visionary Desmarets of St. Sorlin.

It is true, Desmarets had rendered them some essential services. He succeeded in the dismembering of Port Royal, to gain some of the nuns. He greatly assisted in the destruction of poor Morin, another visionary more original and more innocent, who believed himself to be the *Holy Spirit*.\* He tells himself how, encouraged by father Canard, (Annat,) king's confessor, he obtained the confidence of this unfortunate, made him believe that he was his disciple, and drew from him some written proofs of his belief, by means of which he was burned, (1663.)

The favour of the all-powerful confessor procured for the most extravagant books of Desmarets, the approbation of the archbishop of Paris. In them he declared himself a prophet, and that he was quite capable of creating, for the king and pope, an army of an hundred and forty-four thousand *devoués*, chevaliers of papal infallibility, in order to exterminate, in concert with Spain, the Turks and the Jansenists.

These *devoués*, or *victims* of love, were people immolated,

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\* A belief common to the middle ages. Morin was a man of the middle ages, who appeared out of place in the seventeenth century. His "*Thoughts*," (1647,) contain many original and eloquent things: there are among others, this beautiful verse, (p. 164)—"Thou knowest well that love changes in him that which he loves." Morin's life was innocent; the decree (so cruel!) accuses him of nothing with respect to manners. Desmarets ruined him because of jealousy; he wished to prophesy on his own account, and was not contented to be the herald of another.

annihilated in themselves, and existed no longer but in God. Hence, they could do no evil. "The soul," writes Desmarets, "having become a nullity, could not *consent*, whatever it might *do*; not having consented, it sinned not. It thinks not at all, neither of what it has done, or of what it has not done, for it has done nothing at all. God being every thing in us, does every thing, bears every thing. The devil can no longer find the creature, neither in itself, for it is a nothing, nor in its acts, for it acts no more.—By an entire dissolution of ourselves, the virtue of the Holy Ghost flows into us, and we become all God by a wonderful *dei-formité*.—If there still be troubles in the inferior part, the superior knows nothing of it; but these two parts subtilized and rarefied, and by being changed into God; the inferior, as well as the other. *God then dwells among the movements of sensuality, which are all sanctified.*"\*

Desmarets, with the privilege of the king, and the approbation of the archbishop, did not withhold from printing this doctrine. Strong in the support of the Jesuits, he preached to the nuns, and frequented the convents. Belonging to the laity, as he did, he became a director of females. He told them of his dreams of devout gallantry, and made inquiries regarding their temptations of the flesh. A *devoué* so well *annihilated*, seem to have the power without danger, of writing the strangest things; the following billet for example:—"I embrace you, my dearest dove, in your nothingness, all nothing that I am, each of us being all in our All, through our amiable Jesus," &c.

What progress in a few years from the publication of the Provincial Letters! What had become of the casuists? Simple people, who took one sin after another, and by a great effort effaced first this, and then that! See in Quietism all swept out at a dash!

Casuistry was an art, which had its masters, its doctors, and its skillful men. But now, why any doctors? Every *spiritual*

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\* Desmarets of St. Sorlin, Delights of the Mind, 29th day, page 470. See also his Spiritual Letters.

man, every devout person, every Jesuit of the short robe,\* can, like him of the long, speak the sweet language of pious tenderness.—The Jesuits have fallen, but Jesuitism gains. The question is no longer *to direct the attention* each day for each case by a particular equivoue. Love, which mingles and confounds all is the sovereign equivoue, the sweetest, the most powerful. Put the will asleep, and there is no more *intention*; the soul “losing its nothingness in its All,” will gently allow itself to be annihilated on the bosom of love.

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\* See note, p. 11.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Continuation of moral Reaction.—Tartuffe, 1664–1669.—Of real Hypocrites.  
Why Tartuffe is not yet a Quietist.*

THE devotee caught in *flagranti delicto* by the worldling; the churchman excommunicated by the comedian.—This is the sense, the aim of the “Comedy of the Tartuffe.”\*

The great moral question put by Plato in his Athenian Tartuffe, (Euthyphron :) “Without justice, can there be any sanctity?”—this question, so clear in itself, but so skillfully obscured by the casuists, was replaced in its day; the theatre strengthened religion and morality,† shattered in the church.

The author of the Tartuffe has taken his subject, not in general society, but in a more contracted sphere; in the family, the fireside, in the *sanctum sanctorum* of modern life. This comedian, this impious man, was of all men the one who had, most at heart, the religion of the family, yet family peace was denied to him. Tender and melancholy, he said sometimes about himself, in his domestic griefs, a grave saying which characterizes him: “I should have foreseen that one thing rendered me little suitable for the society of a family, *my austerity*.”\*

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\* The appearance of *Tartuffe*, and the Conquest of Flanders, mark the literary and political apogee of the age of Louis XIV. France, which up to that time represented the modern principle, then turned against this principle; attacked Holland, and thus distantly prepared the marriage between Holland and England, that is, the grandeur of England and her own ruin.

† St. Evremond, a wit, writes to a friend:—“I have just read the *Tartuffe*.—If I be saved, I shall owe my salvation to it. Devotion is so reasonable in the mouth of Cleante, that she forces me to renounce all my philosophy; and the false devotees are so well painted, that the shame of their picture will make them renounce hypocrisy. *Holy piety, what benefits you bring to the world!*” Letter quoted in the edition of M. Aimé Martin, (1837,) vol. iii. p. 125.

\* See his Life by Grimarest, the notice of M. Genin, (Plutarch Français) and the Biography of Moliere, by M. E. Noel.



The *Tartuffe*, that great and sublime fresco, is of a very simple design—more shadowed, it would have been less popular. The *mental restriction*, and the *direction of intention*, two things at which, since the Provincial Letters, every body laughed, were sufficient for Molière. He dared not put upon the scene the new mysticism, then too little known or too dangerous.

Perhaps, if he had employed the jargon of Desmarets, and of the first Quietists, if he had put into the mouth of Tartuffe their mystical tenderness, there might have happened what did to the ridiculous sonnet of the *misanthrope*—the pit might have admired.

On the eve of the first representation of *Tartuffe*, Molière read the piece to Ninon; “and to pay him in the same coin she told him a similar adventure which had happened her with a wretch of the same kind, whose portrait she drew with such lively and natural colours, that if the piece had not been written, he said he would never have undertaken it.”

What could then be wanting to this master-piece, to this drama so profoundly conceived, so powerfully executed? Undoubtedly nothing but what was excluded by the religious situation of the times, and the customs of our theatre.

One thing impossible to show in so short a drama, (and which constitutes the true procedure of the Hypocrite,) was the preparatory intrigue, the long circuits by which he moves to his purpose—his patient art—his slow fascination.

All is strong here, but a little rude. This man received, through charity, into the house, this low scoundrel; this glutton who eats as much as six; this rascal *with the red ear*—how does he grow bold so quick, and look so high? The declaration of such a man to such a lady, of an intended son-in-law to his future step-mother, astonishes in the reading. On the stage, perhaps one may bear with it better.

Elmira, when the Tartuffe makes her his point blank sur-

prising declaration, is by no means prepared to understand him. A true hypocrite would have managed the thing much otherwise. Humble and patient, he would have slowly obtained a footing in the house, and have awaited the favorable moment. If, for example, Elmira had experienced the indiscretions, the levities of worldly lovers, spoken of by Tartuffe, when broken with these trials, enervated, feeble and weary, he might have accosted her; then perhaps she herself might have said, in the sweet, Quietist jargon, many things that she cannot understand at the moment when Molière takes her.

Mademoiselle Bourignon, in her curious *Life*, a book that should be reprinted, relates in what danger she found herself in consequence of her confidence in a saint of this kind. I let her tell her own story. It must, however, be understood beforehand, that the pious damsel, who had come to an inheritance, thought of employing this property in pious works—for example, in endowments of convents.

“One day, being in the streets of Lille, I met a man whom I knew not, who said to me while passing: ‘You will not do what you wish—you will do what you do not wish.’ Two days after, the same man came to my house, and said, ‘What did you think of me?’ ‘That you were,’ answered I, ‘either a fool or a prophet.’ ‘Neither,’ said he; ‘I am a poor man, of a village near Douay. I am called Jean of St. Saulieu. I have no study but that of charity. I first lived with a hermit, and now I have, as a director, my *curé*, M. Roussel. I teach poor children to read. The finest charity that you can do is, to shelter the little orphan girls; there are so many of them since the wars! The convents are rich enough.’ He spoke three hours consecutively with much unction.

“I inquired of the *curé* regarding him, and he assured me that he was a man of a zeal quite apostolical. [*We may remark that the curé had first tried to gain the rich heiress for his own nephew; the nephew having failed, he urged his creature.*] Saint Saulieu often returned and spoke divinely of

spiritual things. I did not understand how a man without study could speak in a manner so lofty of divine mysteries. I thought him really inspired by the Holy Spirit. He himself said that he was dead to nature. He had been a soldier, and had returned from the war as uncontaminated as a child. By force of abstinence, he had lost the taste of aliments and drinks, and could no more distinguish wine from beer! He passed the best part of his time on his knees in the churches. If seen walking in the street, it was with modest air and downcast eyes, without regarding any thing, and as if he had been alone in the world. He visited the poor, and sick, and gave away all that he possessed. In the winter season, did he see a poor man without sufficient clothing, he would draw him aside, take off his coat and give it to him. My heart was rejoiced to find that there were such men in the world; I thanked God for it, and thought to have found here another myself. The priests and other pious persons had the same confidence; they went to consult him, and received good counsels.

“I had much repugnance against going from my solitude to found this children’s hospital that St. Saulieu advised. But he brought me a merchant who had begun the same thing, and who offered me a house into which he had already received some poor little girls. I entered there in November, 1653. I washed these children, who were dirty enough to horrify one. I had much trouble, having nobody with me who liked to work. But at last, I made a rule, subjecting myself to it, putting every thing in common, and eating at the same table. I kept myself alone as much as I could; but I was obliged to speak to all sorts of persons. Monks and devotees came, whose conversation scarcely pleased me—I was twice or thrice sick almost to death.

“The house in which St. Saulieu taught having been destroyed, and himself sent away, he withdrew to the merchant’s house of whom I have spoken. They solicited me to aid in building a hospital like mine, for boys. To procure the first

funds for it, St. Saulieu was to farm a bureau in the city, which was worth two thousand francs a year, and the revenue of which would go for that foundation. I became security for him. He received one year, and then said, that it was necessary, before beginning any thing, to receive a year farther, in order to have wherewith to furnish the house. This made four thousand francs; when he had gained six thousand, he kept it, saying it was the fruit of his labour, and that he had well earned it.

“I had not awaited this to enter into distrust. I had had regarding this man, strange revelations. I saw one day a black wolf playing with a little white sheep. Another day I saw the heart of St. Saulieu, and an infant Moor with a crown and sceptre of gold, who was seated upon it, as if the devil had been the king of his heart. I did not conceal these visions from him—but he flew into a passion, and said that I ought to confess myself for thinking so ill of a neighbour, who, far from being a black wolf, on the contrary, in approaching me, became more and more white and chaste.

“One day, however, he told me that we ought to be married, still preserving our virginity; that in this union we should be able to do more good. To which I answered, that such an union required no marriage. He made me, however, some little demonstration of friendship—to which I at first paid no attention. At last, he suddenly revealed himself: said that he desperately loved me; that for several years he had read spiritual books, the better to gain me; that now having had so much access to me, I must be his wife, either through love, or force. And he approached to caress me. I felt very angry, and ordered him to begone. Then he melted into tears, fell on his knees, and told me that it was the devil that tempted him. I was good enough to believe him and accord him pardon.

“The thing did not rest here—he was continually resuming it. He followed me every where; he entered the house in spite of my girls. He even went so far as to put a knife under



my throat to oblige me to yield. At the same time he every where gave out that he had possessed me,\* *‘that I was his promised wife.’* In vain I complained to his confessor, then to the justice, who gave me two men to guard my house, and began to make inquiries. St. Saulieu immediately quitted Lille and went to Ghent, where he found one of my girls, very devout, who passed for a mirror of perfection; he lived with her till tell-tale consequences followed. He had arranged his affair at Lille by favour of having a brother among the Jesuits; they employed their friends, and he was acquitted on paying the costs, retracting his slanders, and acknowledging that I was a virtuous girl.”\*

This took place from 1653 to 1658; consequently, only a few years before the representation of the *Tartuffe* of Molière, who played the first three acts in 1664. Every thing induces us to believe that the adventure was not uncommon at that period. Tartuffe, Orgon, all the personages of that truly historical piece, are not abstract beings, pure creations of art, like the heroes of Corneille or Racine—they are real men, and drawn to the life.

What is striking in the Flemish Tartuffe of Madam Oiselle de Bourignon, is his patience in studying and learning the mystics, in order to speak their language, and the perseverance with which he associated himself during several years, to the thoughts of the pious girl.

If Molière had not been confined to so narrow a frame, if his Tartuffe had had time to prepare better his advances; if he had been able (a thing then undoubtedly too dangerous) to take the mantle of Desmarets, and of the growing Quietism, he would have been nearer the goal, without being discovered.—The hypocrite would not, almost at the very commencement, made the confession that he is a rogue, and that, too, (a con-

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\* I have abridged and mixed the two recitals of Mademoiselle de Bourignon. See the sequel of Vol. I. of her works, (Amsterdam, 1686,) page 68—80, and 188—197.

fession the least seductive of all,) to the very person whom he is striving to corrupt. Nor would he have ventured upon the expression, "If it be only heaven"—Act IV., scene 5. Instead of suddenly unmasking the ugliness of corruption, he would have developed it in the painting by slow degrees. From equivoque to equivoque, by a skilful explanation he might have made corruption itself seem perfection. Nay, there might, at last have happened to him what has happened to many. He might have played the part so long, that he would finish by ceasing to have need of hypocrisy; having deceived and seduced himself into the belief that he was a saint. Then he would have been Tartuffe in the superlative degree, Tartuffe not to the world only, but to Tartuffe himself; having perfectly extinguished all the light of good within him, and reposed himself in evil with the security of an ignorance, at first desired—now become sincere.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Appearance of Molinos, 1675.—His Success at Rome.—French Quietists.—Madame Guyon.—Her Director.—The Torrents.—The Mystical Death.—What Next?*

THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE of Molinos was published at Rome in 1675. The world having been prepared for twenty years for this work, by publications of the same tendency, and the *Guide* being highly approved by the inquisitors of Rome and of Spain, had a success at that time unique. In twelve years it was translated and reprinted twenty times.\*

It is not astonishing that this guide to the annihilation of self—this method of mystical death was so eagerly received. There was at that time throughout all Europe a great feeling of fatigue. This century, already far from having fulfilled its duty, panted for repose. This fact appears in its doctrines.—The philosophy of Descartes, which gave the age its impulse, became itself inactive and contemplative in Malafranche, (1674.) Spinoza, (1670) had made God, man, and the world immoveable in the unity of substance. In 1676, Hobbes gave the world his theory of political fatalism.

Spinoza, Hobbes, and Molinos, death in metaphysics, death in politics, death in morality! What a gloomy choir! they agree without knowing, without understanding each other, they seem to respond from one end of Europe to the other!

Poor human liberty has only the choice of suicide. At the north it allows itself to be pushed by logic into the abysses of Spinoza; at the south, seduced by the sweet voice of Molinos, it is lulled to sleep in the *Maremmes*, never to awaken.

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\* This is the testimony which his enthusiastic admirer, the archbishop of Palermo, renders, at the head of the Latin translation, 1687.

The age is, however, in its lustre, in all its triumph. Time is necessary in order that these thoughts of discouragement and death may pass from theories to facts, and that politics may participate in this moral languor.

There is a critical moment, interesting in every life, between the age of growing strength, and the age still brilliant, when the strength sinks, and the descent imperceptibly begins. In the month of August the trees have all their leaves, but at last their colour clouds, more than one has faded, and in their splendid summer they present you their autumn.

Now, for some time a lukewarm wind blew from the south, from Italy, or rather from Spain. Italy was too dead, too near the sepulchre, even to be able to produce a doctrine of death. It was a Spaniard established at Rome, in Italian languor, who gave that theory, and who drew the practical method from it. At length it became necessary that his disciples should oblige him to write and to publish. For twenty-years Molinos was contented to sow, with little noise, his doctrine at Rome. He bore it all quietly from palace to palace. The Theology of Repose was going on marvellously at the city of the catacombs; at that city of silence, where, since that time, little has been heard "but a small rustling of worms at the sepulchre."

When the Spaniard came to Rome, she had scarcely come out of the feminine pontificate of Madam Olympe. The Order of Jesus itself slept in the delicate hands of its general, Oliva, amongst sumptuous vines, exotic flowers, lilies and roses. It was to those indolent Romans, to that idle nobility, to those beautiful sluggards who live on couches, with their eyes half closed, that towards evening Molinos came to speak—must I say speak? That low voice, mute, as it were, is confounded in this half sleep with their internal dreams.

Quietism had quite another character in France. In a living country, even the theory of death will show life. They were at infinite pains to prove that it was no longer necessary



to act. This did injury to the doctrine; the noise, the light hurt it. A friend of darkness, the delicate plant wished to grow in the shade. Without speaking of the chimerical Desmarets, who could only render an opinion ridiculous, Malaval appeared to foresee that by the new doctrine Christianity was outdone. On the subject of the saying of Jesus, "I am the way," an astonishing speech escaped from him in that age. "Since he is the way, let us pass through him—but *he who always passes, never arrives.*"\*

Our French Quietists, in their lucid analysis, in their rich and fruitful developments, made known for the first time what had scarcely been divined under the obscure form that Quietism had prudently preserved in other countries. Many things which seemed in other countries in the germ, scarcely formed, appeared with Madam Guyon in their bloom. It was a complete light, a sun at high noon. The singular purity of this woman rendered her intrepid in the exposition of the most dangerous ideas. Pure from interest, she was also pure from imagination; she never had any need to represent under a material form the object of her pious love.† This was what raised her mysticism much above the gross and sensual devotions of the Sacred Heart, commenced by the Visitandine Marie Alacoque about the same time. Madam Guyon was too *spiritual* to give "figure to her God," she really loved a spirit. Hence arose her confidence, an unlimited boldness. She bravely attempts, without suspecting that she is brave, the most hazardous steps; she goes from high to low, even to places the most avoided; where every body is frightened and stops, she goes on still, like a light which shines upon every thing, without ever itself becoming sullied.

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\* Malaval *Pratique facile*, 1670. The first part had been already printed twice.

† See her life, written by herself, Cologne, 1720, vol. 1, p. 80. My prayer was from that time void of all forms, kinds and images. See also page 83, against visions.

These boldnesses, innocent in a woman so pure, had not the less a dangerous influence upon the weak. Her confessor, the father Lacombe, was shipwrecked in that abyss, was swallowed up and perished in it. The person and the doctrine had equally perplexed him. All that we know of his connection with her betrays a strange weakness, that she scarcely seems from the height at which she hovered, to have deigned to remark. The first time that he saw her, still young, again married, and thinking of her old husband, he was so vividly smitten at the heart, that he fainted. Afterwards, having become her humble disciple, under the name of director, he accompanied her every where in her adventurous life in France and Savoy. He did not quit her one step, "and could not have dined without her." He had become himself a caricature of her. Arrested at the same time as herself, in 1687, he was ten years a prisoner in the forts of the Pyrenees. In 1698, they took advantage of his weakness of mind to make him write a compromising letter to Madam Guyon.\* "The poor man," said she, laughing, "has become a dotard." He was so much so that, a few days after, he died at Clarenton.

This folly astonishes me but little when I read the Torrents of Madam Guyon, that capricious book, charming and terrible. I must say a word respecting it.

When she wrote it, she happened to be at Annecy, at the convent of the *New Converts*. She had left her property to her family, and even the small income that she reserved to herself, she gave to that religious house, in which she was treated very ill. This delicate woman, who had passed her life in luxury, was obliged to labour with her hands beyond her strength, in washing and sweeping. Father Lacombe, then at Rome, recommended her to write whatever came into her mind. "It is to obey," said she, "that I am going to

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\* See the correspondence of Bossuet, the relation of Phélippeaux, &c.

write what I know not myself." She took a ream of paper, and at its head wrote these words: *The Torrents*.

Even as the torrents of the Alps, the rivulets, the streams, the rivers, and all the waters which descend from them, run with all their force to the sea, in like manner our souls, by an effect of their spiritual inclination, hasten to return and lose themselves in God. This comparison of the living waters is not to her a simple text which serves as a point of departure; she follows it, in almost the whole volume, with a grace always reviving. One would fancy that this amiable prattle might at length weary—but no. It is plainly perceptible that this facility is not a mere affair of the tongue—it has its source in the heart. The author was evidently an unlettered woman. She had read the *Imitation*, the *Philothea* of St. Francis, *Don Quixotte*, and some short narratives. She knew nothing at all, and had seen but little. Nay, the very *Torrents* which she described, she observed not in the Alps where she was—she saw them in herself, and regarded nature in the mirror of her own heart.

One reads this book as if he were actually musing near the brink of a cascade, where he could hear the murmuring of waters. They fall evermore with a sweetness, an enchantment, varying their monotony by a thousand accidents of noise and light. You see the approach of waters in all forms—the images of human souls. There are rivers which are content to gain other rivers; there are those which pursue their way slowly to the sea, great majestic currents, all covered with boats, and travellers, and merchandise. These last (which represent the souls of saints and great teachers) are admired and blessed for the benefits which they render. There are other streams more narrow and more rapid, which are good for nothing, which cannot be navigated, which run and precipitate themselves, as if impatient to surrender themselves to the great sea. These waters have terrible falls—sometimes they sully themselves—now they disappear! Ah!

poor torrent, what hast thou become? It is not lost yet; it returns to the surface but only to lose itself anew. It is very far yet from reaching the sea. Before that happen it must be broken on the rocks, scattered, and in a manner annihilated.

When she has led her torrent to this great fall, the comparison of the living water causes her be at fault—she leaves it; the torrent again becomes a soul. No image of nature could express what this soul is about to suffer. There begins a strange drama in which it might seem no person dared to venture—that of *the mystical death*. One may find in previous books a word here and there upon this obscure subject, but nobody had yet opened the tomb to this point—the profound grave in which the soul is about to be buried. Madame Guyon brings to the work a kind of complacence and perseverance, (I was going to say eagerness,) in searching still deeper—seeking beyond all funereal ideas a death more definitive, a death more dead still.

There are many things in this book which we would hardly expect from the hand of a woman. Dragged along by passion, the writer forgets reserve. From the soul about to become extinct, the Divine Lover strips her ornaments—the gifts which adorn her. Her vestments—that is to say, the virtues in which she had enveloped herself—are torn away. Oh shame! She finds herself naked, and knows not where to hide! But this is not enough. She is deprived of her beauty. Horror! She discovers herself ugly! A terrified wanderer, as she wildly runs, she stains herself. The more eagerly she runs toward God, “the more is she soiled in the paths full of filth through which she must run.” Poor, naked, ugly, and dirty, she loses the taste for every thing—the understanding, the memory, and the will. At last, beyond the loss of the will, she loses a something indescribable, “which is her favourite,” and which would take the place of ALL,\* (the idea

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\* ALL—Utterly untranslatable in a sentence, though the author has supplied in a parenthesis something of a key. When a mystic had got rid



that she is a child of God.) This is properly *the death* to which she must arrive. No person, neither director, nor any one else, can offer solace here. She must die; she must be put into the earth that the crowd may walk above her—that she may grow putrid, rot, and suffer the odour and fetor of a corpse, until, the rottenness becoming dust and ashes, there scarcely subsists any thing which can recall the fact that the soul has ever existed.

This dust and ashes, which was the soul, if it thinks at all, must, apparently, think that it will remain for ever, immovable, in the bosom of the earth. Ah! What surprise is this? A straggling ray from the sun darting for a moment through a crack in the tomb? But no—the ray endures, death warms to life again, the soul obtains a strength—and in some manner a life, but it is not its own life, it is *the life in God*. It has no longer either will or desire. What has it to do to possess what it loves? Nothing, nothing, and always nothing. In this condition can it have any faults? Undoubtedly it has some, it knows them, but does nothing to get rid of them,\* for to do this it would be necessary for it to come back, to occupy itself with itself. “These are little clouds that must be allowed to dissipate themselves. The soul has now God for a soul, he is henceforth its principle of life—it is *one, and identical*.”

“In this condition, nothing occurs extraordinary—no visions, no revelations, ecstasies, ravishment. Such things are not in this path, which is simple, pure, and naked, seeing nothing but in God, *as God sees himself*, and by his eyes.”

Thus the book ends, after so many immoral and dangerous things, in a singular purity, which the most of the mystics have

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of understanding, memory, will, and that “something” more, the soul *lost itself in all*—and had no longer its identity. Very much like nonsense; and if the reader does not understand it in English, he may be very sure that there are abundance of people who do not comprehend it in the original.—*Trans.*

\* Madam Guyon, the *Torrents*, (Opuscles, Cologne, 1701, p. 291.)

not approached. A sweet revival, without vision or ecstasy, a view, divinely plain and serene, becomes the portion of the soul, which shall have traversed all the degrees of death.

If we understand Madam Guyon, the life bruised, sullied, destroyed, will awake in God. That which has passed through all the horrors of the tomb, which, living, became a corpse, which has communed with the worms, and having become rottenness has fallen to dust and ashes, will again resume life and flourish in the sun!

What less credible, less conformable to nature? She deceives herself and us by an equivoque. The life that she promises us after this death, is not ours. To our identity extinguished, effaced, annihilated, another will succeed, infinite, perfect—but which is not ours.

I had not read the *Torrents*, when all this was for the first time represented to my mind. I ascended the saint Gothard, and advanced to meet the violent Reuss, which descends the mountain in a course so furious. In spite of myself, I associated the imagination to the terrible labour by which it pierced its route through the rocks which confine it and bar its passage. I was frightened at its falls, the efforts that it seems to make, like a poor soul in trouble, in order to fly, to hide and be seen no more. It twists at the Devil's bridge, and exactly at the point in which it does so, lanches from an immense height to the bottom of the abyss. For a moment it ceases to be a river—it is only a tempest between heaven and earth, a glacial vapour, a frightful wind of hoar-frost which obscures the dark valley. Ascend higher, still higher. You traverse a cavern, you pass a hollow rock. And here is where the noise ceases. It is all over with this great combat. There is peace, and silence. And life, does it recommence? After that death struggle will you find the revival? The spot is sterile, there are no more flowers, the grass is scarce and poor. Nothing animated moves, not a bird in the firmament, not an insect upon the earth. It is true that you again see the sun, but without rays, without heat.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Fenelon as Director.—His Quietism.—Maxims of the Saints, 1697.—Fenelon and Madame de Maisonfort.*

MADAME GUYON was not, it would seem, quite the extravagant and chimerical person that her enemies represent her. On arriving at Paris from Savoy, she was shrewd enough to discern and win, immediately, the man most capable of causing her doctrines to be relished. He was a man of genius, who had, moreover, an infinite deal of wit and address. He had, in addition, the merit which, if need be, will atone for the absence of all others—that of being, just at that moment, the spiritual director most in fashion. To Madame Guyon, the new Chantal, a St. Francis was necessary. She found him in Fenelon—less severe and innocent it is true, less radiant with youth and seraphic beauty, but singularly noble and polished, subtile, eloquent, self-possessed, and very politic.\*

She laid hands upon him, seized him, and carried him off without difficulty. This great and fine mind which contained every thing, and every contradiction, would have probably fluctuated for ever, but for this powerful impulsion which cast him on one side. Hitherto he had varied amongst diverse opinions, between opposite parties and bodies, in such a manner that each claimed him as its own, and believed it had him.—An assiduous courtier of Bossuet whose disciple he called himself, and whom he did not quit a step in his retreats to the Meaux—he was not less a friend to the Jesuits, and between

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\* See the learned Tabaraud, (Supplement to Bossuet's History, 1832,) and the appreciation very fine, very judicious, of two excellent critics, M. Monty (De M. Le duc de Burgoyne,) and M. Thomas, (*Une Province sous Louis XIV.*)

the two, he still held to St. Sulpice. In this theology inclining now to grace, and now to free-will—imbued with the old mystics, and yet full of anticipations of the eighteenth century, he seems to have under his faith, some obscure corners of skepticism, which he was careful not to sound. All these elements, incapable of mixing, all harmonized externally in the easy undulations of his delicate and graceful mind. Greek and Christian, he recalled at once, the fathers, the philosophers, and the romancers of the Alexandrian era. Sometimes, too, the sophist suddenly became a prophet, and, in a sermon, tried a flight upon the wings of Isaiah.

Every thing induces us to believe that the wonderful author was the lesser moiety of Fenelon. As a director he excelled all others. Who can say by what spell he caught and enchanted souls? One perceives it in the fascination of his correspondence, mutilated as it is.\* No one has been more cruelly cut up, expurgated, and designedly obscured. Even in these fragments and scattered remains the charm continues potent yet. Besides the loftiness of manner, the confident and sharp tone which seems to indicate that he feels himself little less than an apostle, he has that which is peculiar to himself—woman's delicacy without her weakness, and an indescribable something, tender and affecting, carried to the very refinement of subtilty. While yet young, and before he became the preceptor of the Duke of Burgundy, he had for a long time directed the *new converts*. There he had opportunity to study woman, and to acquire that perfect knowledge of the female heart, in which no other has approached him. The passionate interest which they took in his fortune; the tears of that little flock, the Dutchesses of Chevreuse, of Beauvilliers, and others, when he failed of obtaining the archbishopric of Paris, and their obstinate fidelity to their well-beloved guide, in the

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\* A bishop, then inspector of the University, has boasted before me, (and before several persons who can testify to it if necessary,) of having burned Fenelon's Letters.



exile to Cambray, in which he remained until his death—all this is supplied by the mutilated correspondence. It gives an extraordinary idea of the magician whose invincible spells no power could break.

What a rash enterprise it was to introduce into that world of expedients and ceremonies, Versailles, a spirituality so refined and lofty—such a pretension to the supreme perfection! It was done, too, at the end of a reign when every thing seemed frozen. Fenelon could not introduce Quietism at Versailles by losing himself, like Madame Guyon, in the solitude of the Alps, and the *torrents* of the *Divine love*. It was necessary to put the appearance of good sense, and the manner of reason, even into this folly of love. It was requisite, as says the ancient comedian, *to become mad by rule and measure*. This is what Fenelon tried in the *Maxims of the Saints*. Molinos condemned, Madame Guyon imprisoned at Versailles, he was sufficiently warned. He declared himself, but prudently, and kept in the manner of his decisions even, a sort of indecision.

Nevertheless, with all his ability, his address and his windings, if he differ from the absolute Quietist whom he affects to condemn, it is less upon the principles of the doctrine than the degree to which he admits it. He thought he was doing a great deal in saying that the state of quietude in which the soul loses activity is, not a state *perpetually*, but *habitually*, passive. In acknowledging inaction superior to action, as the perfect state, does he not make it desirable that the inactivity should be perpetual?

That soul, according to Fenelon, which has become *habitually* passive, concentrates itself on high, leaving its inferior part below. The acts of that inferior part are entirely *blind* and involuntary. But, these acts *being accounted voluntary*, he acknowledges that the superior part is responsible for them. Are the acts of the inferior then regulated by the superior part? By no means. It is absorbed in its high quietude. Who,

then, interferes at this point of deficiency? Who prevents disorder in the lower sphere, when the soul no more descends to regulate it? Fenelon expressly says, "*It is the director.*"\*

Although in theory Fenelon modifies Molinos, that is less important than it seems. The speculative part of the matter, which so much occupied Bossuet, is not the most important in a case where the practical is so directly interested. It is a serious consideration that Fenelon as well as Molinos, having erected a great scaffolding of rules, still did not furnish rules enough. Every moment the aid of the director is necessary. He establishes a system—but that system cannot go alone. The hand of man is indispensable to it. This inert theory requires every moment the supplement of a consultation—an empirical expedient. The director is to the soul as a supplementary soul, which, while the soul proper sleeps upon the mountain, regulates and conducts every thing for it in the world down below, this world of realities.

Thus it is, *man* always *man*, that you find at the heart of their doctrines by squeezing and pressing them. *Man* is the *ultima ratio* of their systems, and as their theory is, such is their practice. I leave these illustrious adversaries, Fenelon and Bossuet, to fight for opinions. I like better to observe their practice. There I find that the theory is little, the man much. Quietists and anti-Quietists do not essentially differ in their method of smothering the soul and benumbing the will.

Behind this combat of theories—and indeed before the combat of theories commenced—there was a personal combat between the parties, very curious to observe.

The wager of the combat, if I dare so to speak, the spiritual conquest that the two parties disputed with each other for, was a woman, a charming soul, full of rapture and youth, imprudent vivacity and naive truth.\* She was a niece of Madame

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\* Maxims of the Saints, article 14. See also 8, 20, 39, 4.

† What a singular destiny was that of the young girl, whose tears Racine one day wiped away, (she played Elise in *Esther*,) and whom Fenelon

Guyon, a young damsel who was called Madam (she was a canoness) de la Maisonfort. This lady, noble and poor, maltreated by a step-mother and a re-married father, had fallen into the cold and political hands of Madam de Maintenon. Whether for the vanity of founding, or as the means of amusing an old king little amusable, she was then building Saint Cyr for noble damsels. She knew that the king was always susceptible to women, and seldom allowed him to see any except old women or children. The boarders of Saint Cyr, who in the innocence of their games refreshed the eyes of the old man, brought to his mind another age, and afforded him a sweet and but little dangerous opportunity of paternal gallantry.

Madam de Maintenon, who owed, as is known, her singular fortune to a certain decent harmony of mediocre qualities, sought something eminently mediocre, if one may thus speak, to govern that house. She could find nothing better any where than among the Sulpicians and the Lazarists. The Sulpician Godet, whom she took for her own director and that of St. Cyr, was a pedant of merit. This is nearly the definition that St. Simon, who esteemed him, gives of him. Madam de Maintenon saw in him the dry and literal priest, who could secure her against every eccentricity. With such a person one could rest tranquil. Over the two men of genius who aspired to the direction at St. Cyr, the Jansenist Racine, and the Quietist Fenelon,\* she preferred Godet.

One need not to know its history; only to see the house of St. Cyr, is to recognise without difficulty the true domicile of *ennui*. The soul of the foundress, that soul of a governess is there felt every where. One yawns even to look at it. Still if that building was gloomy, sadness itself is an aliment

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and Bossuet caused so much to weep! See M. De Noailles, St. Cyr, p. 113, (1843.)

\* "Either Racine or M. de Cambray, in speaking to you of Jansenism, would have dragged you into it," &c.—Madam Maintenon's Letters, II., 190—(edition of 1757.)

for the soul. No, it is not sad, neither is it gay; there is nothing to be said about it, no character, no style, nothing that one can even find fault with. Of what age is the chapel? Neither the Gothic, nor the modern, it is not even the Jesuit style. But then, there is perhaps the Jansenist austerity? That is by no means austere. What is it then? Nothing. But this nothing has a power of weariness that one could find no where else.

After the first moment, half devout, half worldly, from the representations of *Athalie* and *Esther*, which the young girls had but too well played, the reformed boarding-house became a kind of convent. Instead of Racine, it was the Abbe Pelegrin and Madam Maintenon who wrote pieces for St. Cyr.\* The Lady Instructresses must be nuns. A great change, which displeased Louis XIV. himself,† and might have compromised the new establishment. Madam Maintenon seems to have been sensible of it, and she sought *for the foundation stone of her edifice*, a living stone, alas! a woman full of grace and life. It was the poor Maisonfort that they decided to veil, cloister, and seal up in the foundations of St. Cyr.

But Madam de Maintenon, competent hitherto in all she undertook, was foiled here. La Maisonfort was spirited and independent. All the kings and queens in the world would have failed in compelling her against her inclination. Her heart alone, skillfully touched, could lead her where they wished. Madam Maintenon, who was exceedingly tenacious of her purpose, made efforts, at which, in reading her letters, we are astonished. Generally so reserved, in this correspondence she appears in a new character. She makes La Maisonfort her confidant, and in order to win her confidence in return, does not hesitate to avow to her that she is herself disgusted

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\* Unedited proverbs of Madam Maintenon, (1829.) See also her Conversations, (1828,) and her Spirit of the Institute of the daughters of St. Louis, (1808.)<sup>v</sup>

† M. de Noailles, St. Cyr, p. 131.



with the world, and that, holding the highest place in it, she "was dying of melancholy and weariness."

But a step much more efficacious was that of employing a new director—seductive—charming—irresistible. The Abbe de Fenelon, at that time on the best of terms with Madam Maintenon, dined every Sunday with her, the dutchesses of Beauvilliers and Chevreuse. These parties were strictly *entre elles*—no servants being admitted to listen to the conversation. The attraction of La Maisonfort to the unique Fenelon was very great—and the authority of her patroness directed her to follow this attraction. "See the Abbe de Fenelon," Madam de Maintenon wrote to her, "accustom yourself to his traits of mind and character.\*"

This agreeable command to so pleasant a course she followed only too well. With such a man—one who put everything in the most agreeable light by his own charming manner of treating it, and who simplified and facilitated matters the most difficult, the neophyte did not walk, but flew between heaven and earth, in the sweet indifference of the *Love Divine*. So much attraction, sanctity and freedom, all at once, was too powerful for her poor heart.

St. Simon relates by what means of espionage and treachery Godet obtained proof of the presence of Quietism in St. Cyr. But he needed not so much address. La Maisonfort was so pure as to be imprudent. In the happiness of that new spirituality into which she had entered with her whole soul, she said even more than her persecutors wished her to say.

Suspected as Fenelon had then become, she was, however, left to him, until she had made great progress. They expected that she would, under that influence, notwithstanding her protestations and her tears, take the veil, and permit the fatal grate to be closed for ever upon her.

Two consultations were held at St. Cyr, to determine the

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\* Letter quoted by Phélippeaux, *Relatione du Quietisme*, vol. i. 48.

fate of the victim. Godet, supported by the Lazarists, Thi-berg and Brisacier, determined that she should become a nun; and Fenelon, who was one of this beautiful council, did not oppose their decision. She relates herself that during the deliberation, "she withdrew before the Holy Sacrament in a terrible agony—that she thought she should die of grief, and that she shed all night in her chamber a torrent of tears.

The deliberation was a matter of pure form. Madame de Maintenon had determined—it remained for them only to obey. No person, at that moment, depended more upon her than Fenelon. The decisive crisis for Quietism had arrived. The question was, whether the teacher, doctor, scribe, and prophet of the doctrine—a person little agreeable to the king, by whom, however, he was, as yet, not much known—should obtain the high position in the church to which his friends desired to push him, while yet his doctrine had not burst forth. From thence came his unlimited devotion to Madame Maintenon—from thence the sacrifice of the poor Maisonfort to her all powerful will. Fenelon, who perfectly understood how little was her inclination to the veil, sacrificed her, not indeed entirely for his personal interest, but for the advancement of his doctrines and the aggrandizement of his party.

As soon as she was veiled, and cloistered for ever, he gradually withdrew from her acquaintance. Too frank and too imprudent, she had done his doctrines, (which were already sharply attacked,) an injury. He had no need of friendships which compromised him. He needed politic and wary supporters. He addressed himself, in his extremity, to the Jesuits, and took a confessor from among them. Their order had had the prudence to keep on terms with Quietists and anti-Quietists.

To fall back from Fenelon to Godet, to re-enter his dry and hard direction was more than the new nun could endure. One day when he came to her with the little constitutions and minute rules which he had prepared in conjunction with Ma-

dame de Maintenon, La Maisonfort could no longer contain herself. To his presence, and in that of the powerful founder of the house, Madame Maintenon, she boldly told him the contempt she felt for him. In a short time a *lettre de cachet* drove her cruelly from St. Cyr.

Against all this hostile world—these Godets and Brisaciers she had made too excellent a defence. Abandoned by Fenelon, she endeavoured to remain faithful to his doctrines, and was obstinate in retaining his books. It became necessary that they should call upon the great power of the times, Bossuet, to reduce the rebel. But she would not receive the advice of Bossuet, until she had inquired of Fenelon whether she might do so. To this last mark of confidence he replied, I regret to say, in a formal and sullen letter,\* jealousy is too apparent in it, and regret at seeing her whom he had not defended, pass under the influence of another.

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\* The letter is entire in Phélippeaux, I.—164. “It is not an evidence that one is doing well, when there is need of so great a number of physicians,” etc.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Bossuet as Director.—Bossuet and Sister Cornuau.—His Sincerity and his Imprudence.—He is a Quietest in Practice.—Devout Direction inclines to Quietism.—Mental Paralysis.*

NOTHING can better establish the character of direction itself than the correspondence of the most worthy and faithful director—I mean Bossuet. The test is decisive. If the results are bad, it is the method and the system which we must censure, and not the man.

The grandeur of his genius and the nobleness of his character naturally elevated Bossuet above the vulgar among directors—their trifles, jealousies, and intermeddling tyrannies. We may believe one of his penitents, who says: “Without condemning those directors, who rule even to the least thoughts and affections, Bossuet could not approve that practice in regard to souls who love God, and have made some progress in the spiritual life.”\*

His correspondence is noble, worthy, serious. You find there none of the too caressing tenderness of St. Francis of Sales, and far less the refinements and passionate subtleties of Fenelon. Less austere than the letters of St. Cyran, those of Bossuet will very well compare with them for seriousness. They have often a loftiness of diction which seems not very well suited to the humble and mediocre persons to whom they are generally addressed; but it has this advantage, that it keeps them at a distance, and excludes, even in the most confiding *tête-à-tête*, too intimate approaches.

If this correspondence has come down to us more entire than that of Fenelon, we owe it, (at least the most curious part,) to the

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\* Works of Bossuet, advertisement of Sister Cornuau.



reverence which a penitent of Bossuet, the good widow Cornau, preserved for his memory. That worthy personage, in transmitting to us these letters, has religiously left in them a number of details humiliating enough for herself. She has forgotten her own vanity, and thought only of the fame of her spiritual father. In this, her friendship happily guided her; she has done for him, more than, perhaps, any panegyrist. These noble letters, written in profound secrecy, and never intended to see the light, are worthy of being exposed to the perusal of the whole world.

The good widow informs us that when she had the happiness to visit him in his solitude at Meaux, he sometimes received her in "a little place, very cold, where there was much smoke." This was, it would appear, the little pavilion which they show still, at the foot of the garden, on the old rampart of the city, which formed the terrace of the episcopal palace. Above the cabinet, which was upon the ground floor, in a little garret, the valet slept, whose duty it was to awaken Bossuet at early dawn. A dark and narrow path of holly and yew trees leads to this melancholy apartment—old dwarf and stunted trees, which have more and more interlaced their knotted branches and sharp leaves. The dreams of the past haunt the spot. You find there all the thorns of those great polemics, now so far from us; the disputes of Jurieu and of Claude,—the stately history of the Variations, and the mortal combat of Quietism, poisoned by betrayed friendship. Over the serious garden laid out in the French style, soars in its sweet majesty the tower of the cathedral; but you can see it neither from the little dark alley, nor from the melancholy cabinet—a place narrow, cold, and of ungracious aspect. Notwithstanding its grand associations, the cabinet startles you with its emptiness, and recalls the day, when, in that fine genius, the best priest of his time, this little apartment had a priest also.

There was only one way in which that ruling spirit could be touched, and that was by docility and obedience. In this the good Cornuau surpassed all that he could have expected. She exhibited very much, and we can perceive that she concealed more, through fear of displeasing. She endeavoured, as much as her natural mediocrity permitted, to follow the tastes and ideas of the great man. He had the spirit of government, and so, on a small scale, had she. She charged herself with the affairs of the community in which she resided, and at the same time busied herself in closing up those of her family. She waited thus fifteen years before she was permitted to become a nun. She at length obtained that privilege, and caused herself to be called Sister St. Benigne, taking, at the same time, a little boldly perhaps, the name of Bossuet.

These real and positive cares, in which the wise director so long retained her, had the excellent effect of diverting and curbing her imagination. Hers was a nature passionate and honest, but a little common, with, unfortunately, judgment enough to confess to herself that it was so. She knew, and she said that she was only a little *bourgeoise*, who had neither birth, nor a great mind—neither grace nor knowledge of the world—she had not once even seen Versailles! How could she contend, near him, against his other spiritual daughters—high-born ladies, always brilliant even in their penitence and voluntary humiliations? It seems that, at one time, she had aspired to requite herself in another way, and to rise above these worldlings by mystic vows. She announced, one day, that she had seen visions, and committed one to paper, betraying such poverty of imagination, that Bossuet did not encourage her. What could she do? Nature had refused her wings, and she could not fly. She had, at any rate, no pride, and did not attempt to conceal the gloomy state of her heart.

The humiliating avowal escaped her, that "she was ready to burst with jealousy."

It is a very touching circumstance that, after having made this avowal, the poor creature sacrificed self, and became the nurse of her of whom she was jealous; and who was then afflicted with a frightful disease. She followed her to Paris, shut herself up with her, watched over and loved her! Could this have been for the reason that usually produces an effect precisely the contrary? Was it because the invalid was beloved by Bossuet?

La Cornuau evidently deceived herself in her jealousy. It was herself who was preferred—we can see it now by a comparison of the letters. For her he reserves all his little paternal indulgences—to her alone, he seems at times to melt, so far as his habitual gravity will permit. Occupied as Bossuet was, he found time to write to her nearly two hundred letters. He is certainly more firm and severe with the great lady of whom she is jealous, than with her. He becomes brief, and almost harsh with the lady, when he speaks of replying to the confessions a little broad, which she insists on making to him. He adjourns his answer indefinitely, ("to my great leisure,") and until that time arrived he forbade her to write to him upon such subjects; if not he will "burn her letters without so much as reading them." (November 14, 1691.) He says, in another place, very nobly, upon delicate subjects which may trouble the imagination: "When it happens that one may be compelled to speak of this description of difficulties, and to hear of them, *touch the earth only with the end of the foot.*"

This perfect honesty, which wished to understand nothing of the bad, caused him to forget some things which he should have remembered, and to become too little circumspect. Emboldened by his age, then very discreet, in moments of the transports of the mystical love, he indulged himself in indis-

cretions even before a witness so passionate as La Cornuau. In the presence of a person who was simple, submissive, and inferior in every sense, he believed himself alone, and giving wing to the lively sentiment of poetry which he possessed, even in his old age, he hesitated not to employ the mysterious language of the Song of Songs. It was to calm his penitent, and to confirm her purity, that he employed this burning language. I dare not copy the letter,\* innocent undoubtedly,

\* Some one has done himself the easy pleasure to refute what I have not said, and to prove that Bossuet is an honest man, &c. Well, who has said to the contrary? As this advocate knows not what Quietism is, (any better than he understands the question of Grace and Free Will,) he cites from Bossuet, to exonerate him from Quietism, a passage eminently Quietist: "*Make no effort*, neither of the head nor of the heart, to unite yourself to your Spouse." (Oct. 26, 1694.) What I have said, and what I repeat is, that the most honest director in the world is yet very dangerous; that his language, dictated no doubt by a pure intention, is not the less liable to awake lust. Even when he denounces and forbids, he does it precisely in language most calculated to awaken what he forbids. I like not to contemplate, in these passages, a great man, an old man, who has a right to our respect on other considerations. If, however, he wishes absolutely for proofs, let him read, (Jan. 17, 1692,) "When the sweet wound of love," &c. (June 4, 1695,) "Dare all things with the Celestial Spouse—Lay hold upon him—I permit to you the most violent transports," &c. (July 3, 1695,) "Jesus wills that one should be with him, he wishes joy, he wishes that one should joy with him, his holy flesh is the medium of that chaste enjoyment." (May 14, 1695,) "Kiss in liberty this dear little brother, who daily grows less to become one of us," &c.

If you would have something more personal, notice the manner, truly very gentle, in which he repulses the tendernesses of that noble *religieuse*, whose sensual confidences he had declined to receive: "In truth *I would not wish directly to excite the tendernesses of the heart; but when they come either by themselves, or in the train of other dispositions,*" &c. "*I am not insensible*, Heaven be thanked, *to a certain correspondence of sentiments or of tastes.*" "*But although I very strongly feel these correspondences,*" &c. "*All that one feels relatively with me (par rapport à moi) is in truth, on the part of the other, nothing to me, and there need be no fear of my exposing myself.*" It would appear that the illustrious penitent was affrighted at his sentiments, and wished to take a director less affection-



which he wrote from his country seat of Germigny, July 10th, 1692; and in which he explains the sense of the words of the Spouse: "Comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love." That physician who should cure one passion by a stronger, would be marvellously apt to double the disease.

What astonishes one more than these imprudences is, that you find frequently in the familiar correspondence of this great adversary of Quietism the greater part of the sentiments and practical maxims with which he reproaches the Quietists. He developes carefully their favourite text: *Expectans expectavi*. The soul (*L'Epouse*) must not be eager, she must "tarry in waiting what the Spouse (*L'Epoux*) wills to do. If while waiting, he (*L'Epoux*) caresses the soul, and urges her to caress him, the heart must be given up. The means of the union is the union itself. To leave the Divine Spouse to act (*laissez faire*) is all the sympathy (*correspondance*) on the part of the soul," (*L'Epouse*.)

"Jesus est admirable dans les chastes embrassements dont il honore son Epouse, et la rende feconde; toutes les vertus sont le fruit de ses chastes embrassements." (Feb. 28, 1693.) "There should follow a change in the life—but without that change, *the soul thinks only of being herself changed*."

The letter from which the last extract, thoroughly Quietist, is made, was written May 30th, 1696; and eight days afterward, melancholy inconsistency! he writes the following inhuman words respecting Madame Guyon: "They appear to me determined to shut her up, far from this, *in a good cha-teau*," etc.\*

How can one avoid perceiving that on the question of practice, much more important than theory, he differs in nothing

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ate. He writes: "*I forbid your adhering to the temptation to leave me, or believing that one can be fatigued or wearied in directing you.*"—(Dec. 26, 1694.)

\* Works of Bossuet, XI. 380, and XII, 53, (1836.)

from those he treats so ill? Direction, in Bossuet, as in his adversaries, is the development of the inert and passive parts of our nature. *Expectans expectavi.*

It is to me a spectacle to see them all, from the depth even of the Middle Ages, cry out against the mystics, and fall into mysticism. It must be that the propensity is strong, irresistible. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the profound Rusbrock and the great Gerson imitate exactly those whom they condemn. In the seventeenth, the Quietists Bona, Fenelon, and even Lacombe himself, the director of Madame Guyon, speak severely and harshly of absolute Quietists. All point out the abyss—all fall into it.

Persons are nothing here—there is in it a logical fatality. The man, who by his character and his genius is farthest from the passive paths: he, who in his writings has condemned them with most force, Bossuet, in his practice, walks in them with the rest.

What imports it that they write against the theory of Quietism? Quietism is far less a system than a method; a method of sloth and inertia which we always find, under some form or other, in spiritual direction. It serves no purpose to counsel activity, with Bossuet, or to permit it, with Fenelon, if, taking from the soul all exercise of its activity, and holding it as in leading strings, you deprive it of all habits of activity, and all taste, and strip it of all power to move.

Although the soul has still the semblance of action, is not that an illusion, if that activity is not her own, but that of another, of Bossuet? You show me a person who walks. I know very well that she has that appearance, but I perceive that it is only because that you support her in it, as her principle of action, the cause and reason of her living, walking, moving. There is always in the total the same sum of action, only in the dangerous connection of the director with the directed all the action comes from the first. There is, be-

tween them, only one active force, one will, one person; the directed, losing by degrees every thing which constitutes a person, becomes what? *A thing.*

When Pascal, in his superb disdain for reason, invites us to stupify it, (*abetir*,) to put aside in us what he calls the automaton and the machine, he does not perceive that there will only be a change of our reason for that of another. Our reason having fitted herself with bit and bridle, the reason of another mounts, and rides, conducting her where the rider pleases.

If the automaton preserved some motion, how did they guide it? According to the *probable* doctrine. The *probableism* of the Jesuits prevailed in the first half of the century. Then, movement ceasing, the paralysed age learned *Perfection* itself of the Quietists.

The weakness and impotence of the last years of the times of Louis XIV. are a little concealed by the remnant of a literary eclat. But this sluggishness was not the less profound. It was a natural consequence, not only of the great efforts which had caused exhaustion, but also of the theories of abnegation, of impersonality, and systematic nullity, which had always gained in that century. By the force of saying and repeating that one cannot walk unless sustained by another, there was raised up a generation who could walk no more at all, and who vaunted themselves, and made it a glory that they had forgotten the power of motion. Madame Guyon, in a letter to Bossuet, in speaking of herself, displays with force, how general was this condition. "You say, Monseigneur, that there are only four or five persons who are in this difficulty with regard to the performance of deeds, but I tell you there are more than a hundred thousand. When you direct me to demand and to desire, I find myself in the condition of a paralytic, whom some one has directed to walk, *because he has legs*. The efforts which he might make for that

purpose would serve only to make him feel his impotence. They say, according to ordinary rules, *all who have limbs can walk*. I believe it; I know it: yet I have limbs and cannot make them serve me."\*

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\* Letter of Feb. 10, 1694, Works of Bossuet, XII. 14, ed. 1839. Compare the melancholy avowals of Sister du Mans, *ibid.* XI. 558, March 30, 1695. See those of Fenelon, *even*, Nov. 8, 1700, Vol. I. 572, ed. of Didot, 1838.



## CHAPTER X.

*The "Guide" of Molinos.—Part which he played as Director.—Hypocritical austerity.—Immoral Doctrine.—Molinos approved at Rome, 1675.—Molinos condemned at Rome, 1687.—His manners conformed to his Doctrine.—The Spanish Molinosistas.—The Mother Agueda.*

FOR him who can no longer move himself—the poor paralytic,—the greatest danger is not in his remaining without action, but of his becoming the puppet of an action not his own. The theories which say most of immobility are not always disinterested. Have a care ! Have a care !

The book of Molinos, artificial and premeditated, has a character which is altogether proper to him, and which distinguishes it from the naive and inspired books of the great female mystics. These, such as Saint Theresa, often recommend obedience, distrust in one's self, and entire submission to the director. They gave themselves thus, a guide, but in their vigorous flight they carried the guide along with them. They thought to follow, but really led him. The director had nothing to do but to sanction their inspiration.\*

The originality of the book of Molinos is entirely opposite to this. There the interior activity truly expires, there is nothing but foreign action. The director is the mainspring

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\* Madame Guyon herself, who has developed more than any other mystic the theory of the mystical death, is dead at her mouth, but always alive at the heart. Even in that ocean, "where the poor torrent is lost," it preserves its own life, and the sweetness of its waters—so great is its force—so powerful its shoot,—so high the mountain from which it falls ! The Rhone pierces the length of its lake—that enormous mass of unfathomable water—and in coming out is the Rhone still. At distant intervals, in all this, we find the director mentioned. But who directed such a torrent ? Poor Father Lacombe could not steer his own barque. The torrent carried him where he floated—he became mad.

of the whole book ; he re-appears at every instant, and even where he disappears, we feel that he is behind us. He is the *guide*, or rather the support, without whom the impotent soul could not make a single step. He is the doctor, always present, who decides whether the invalid may taste this or that. Invalid ? yes and thoroughly an invalid too, since it is necessary, every moment, that another shall think, feel, and act for her—in a word, live in her place.

Can it be said that such a soul lives ? Is not this indeed the true death ? The great female mystics sought the spiritual death, and could not find it. Their living activity continued, even in the sepulchre. To die only in God, to die there by his will and his energy, is certainly not to die utterly. But when by sluggishness one permits his soul to be swallowed in the vortex of another, submitting in a kind of half-sleep to the strange transformation by which your identity is absorbed in his—this is the true moral death. It is necessary to seek no other.

“To act is the deed of the novice; to suffer is already to have profited; to die is perfection. Advance in the dark, and you advance well; the horse that walks blindfold in the mill, grinds the grain all the better. Think not, read not. A practical master will inform you better than all the books, what it is necessary to do at the moment. It is a great security to have an experienced guide, who governs and directs us according to his actual light, and prevents us from being deceived by the devil, or by our own senses.”\*

Molinos, conducting us gently by this road, appears to know very well where he is leading us. I judge by the infinite precautions which he takes to give us confidence, by the notices which he posts everywhere along the way, of

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\* Molinos, *Spiritual Guide*, *passim*.

humility, austerity, excessive scruple, and prudence exaggerated beyond prudence. The holy are not so wise.

In a very humble preface, he believes that this little book, without ornament, without style, without a protector, can have no success. "It will be criticised, without doubt, and all will find it insipid." More humbly yet, on the last page he lays it at the feet of the Holy Roman Church, and submits it to her correction.\*

He gives us to understand that the true director becomes one, only against his wishes. "He is a man who would wish to be dispensed from the care of souls, who sighs and pants after solitude. He is, above all, far from seeking the direction of females; they are generally too little prepared. It is essential that he avoid calling his penitent, *Ma fille*; it is an expression too tender—God is jealous of it. Love itself, passion, that monster with seven heads, takes sometimes the form of gratitude and filial affection for the confessor. He should not go to visit his female penitents at their houses, not even in cases of sickness, *unless he may be called*."†

Behold the astonishing severity, the excessive caution, unknown until the time of Molinos! What a holy man is this! It is true, that if the director ought not of himself to visit his penitent, he can, if she calls him. With such a spiritual director, is she not always ill, embarrassed, fearful, unable to do any thing of herself? She sighs for him continually. All movements which are not from him may be from the devil, the very fibre of remorse which sometimes moves within her—may not that be a thread which the devil draws?‡

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\* The celebrated book of Molinos is not very original. One can find few things there which are not superior in the other Quietists. Read, however, his enthusiastic eulogy on the spiritual extinguishment, of which Bossuet has translated some passages in Book III. of the Instructions on Prayer.

† The Guide, Book II. Chap. 6.

‡ The Guide, Book II. Chap. 17.

But when he is with her, on the contrary, what tranquillity! How he calms her with a word! How he resolves all her scruples! She is well recompensed for having done nothing of herself, for having waited and obeyed, for obeying always. She now feels fully that *obedience is better than all other virtues.*

If she is discreet, he will conduct her still farther. "It is not necessary, if she sins, that she should disquiet herself on that account. If she torments herself respecting this, it will be an indication that she retains yet some of the leaven of pride. It is the devil, who, to check us in the spiritual way, occupies us thus with our own slips. Would it not be foolish in him who runs, to stop when he falls, and weep like a child, instead of pursuing his course? These falls have the excellent effect of guarding us against pride, which is the greatest fall. God makes virtues of our vices; the very sins, by which the devil counts to throw us into the abyss, *will become a ladder by which we mount to heaven.*"\*

This doctrine was well received. Molinos had had the address to publish at the same time another book, which would serve as a passport for this—a Treatise on the Daily Communion, directed against the Jansenists, and the great work of Arnaud. The Spiritual Guide was examined with the favour that Rome would accord to the enemy of her enemies. There was hardly a religious order which did not approve it. The Roman Inquisition gave it three approvals, by three of its members, a Jesuit, a Carmelite, and the General of the Franciscans. The Spanish Inquisition approved it twice, by the Examiner-General of the order of the Capuchins and by a Trinitarian, the Archbishop of Reggio. At the commencement of the book we find an enthusiastic and exalted eulogy of Molinos, by the Archbishop of Palermo. The Quietists

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\* The Guide, Book II. Chap. 18.



had then grown very strong at Rome, since one of them, Cardinal Bona, the protector of Malaval, was on the point of becoming Pope.

But a great reverse took place, contrary to all expectation. The great Gallican tempest of 1682, which for nearly ten years interrupted the connection between France and the Holy See, and showed how easily a country could sever itself from Rome, compelled the Pope to raise the moral dignity of the pontificate by acts of severity. The blow fell especially upon the Jesuits and their friends. Innocent XI. passed a solemn condemnation upon the casuists; a tardy condemnation upon people who had been killed twenty years before by Pascal. Quietism was no more. The Franciscans and the Jesuits had taken it to their hearts. The Dominicans had opposed it. Molinos, in his Manual, had very much depreciated the merits of St. Dominick, and pretended that St. Thomas, *while dying, declared that he had never written any thing good*. Thus, of all the orders, that of the Dominicans is the only one whose approbation was refused to the Guide of Molinos.

Examined under this new influence, the book and the author appeared horribly culpable. The Inquisition of Rome, without being checked by the approval which its examiners pronounced twelve years before, condemned the Guide. They furthermore condemned certain propositions, which they did not find in the book, but drew from the examinations of Molinos, or from his teaching. The following is not the least curious of these propositions: "God, to humiliate us, permits, in some perfect souls, (well awake and in their lucid state,) that the devil makes them commit against their will, acts, which without this possession would be culpable; but there is no sin, because there is no consent. The case may even happen that this devilish possession may occur in the case of two persons, a man and a woman, at the same time."

This case was encountered by Molinos himself much too often. He humiliated himself, and implored pardon for his morals, and did not attempt to defend his doctrine; and this course saved him. The Inquisitors, who had at first approved the Guide, were not a little embarrassed among themselves with this examination. They treated him with gentleness, merely imprisoning him, while two of his disciples, who had only faithfully applied his doctrine, were without pity burned alive. One was a curé of Dijon, the other a priest of Tudela in Navarre.

How can one be astonished that such a theory had these results in manners? If it had *not* produced such consequences, that would have been a fact much more astonishing. For the rest, such things are not derived exclusively from the doctrine of Molinos,—an imprudent and too open doctrine which people are careful not to profess. The same mischiefs come naturally from any practical direction which puts the will into slumber, and deprives the person of this natural guardian, exposed to the mercy of him whose direction has produced the sleep. In the middle ages, the casuists coldly examined the question of the guilt of abusing a dead body. The case is reproduced here; for the death of the will, no less than physical death, leaves the person without defence.

The Archbishop of Palermo, in his Pindaric eulogy on *The Spiritual Guide*, said it was a book admirably and very especially adapted to the direction of female devotees. This opinion was heard and put to profit, above all, in Spain. From the saying of Molinos, that “sins, being the occasion of humility, serve as a ladder to ascend to heaven,” the Molinosistas drew this reasonable deduction: The more one sins, the more one ascends.

There was among the Carmelite nuns of Lerma a devotee, accounted a saint, Mother Agueda. People came to her from all the neighbouring country to obtain the cure of their mala-

dies. A convent was founded in the place which had the honour of giving her birth. They placed her portrait, in reverence, in the choir of the church. At the convent she healed those who were brought to her, by applying to them certain miraculous stones, which, it was stated, she brought forth, with all the pains of childbirth. These miracles endured twenty years. At length it became bruited that the births were more in the order of nature and less miraculous than had been supposed. The Inquisition of Logroño made a descent upon the convent, arrested the Mother, and interrogated the sisters of the convent, and, among them, the young niece of the saint, Dona Vincenta. She acknowledged, without hesitation, the commerce which her aunt, herself, and the other nuns had with the Provincial of the Carmelite friars, the Prior of Lerma, and others of high rank in their Orders. The Mother had given birth to five children, and her niece pointed out the place where they were killed and buried, as soon as born. The bones were found.\*

Not the least horrible circumstance is, that the young girl, cloistered at the age of nine years, submitted, by her aunt, while a child, to this strange life, having no other light, firmly believed that she was in the devout path of perfection and sanctity; and walked in that way in all confidence in the honour of her confessors.

The great teacher of these nuns was the Provincial of the Carmelites, Jean de la Vega. He wrote the life of the saint, and arranged her miracles for her. It was he who had the address to make her a saint, fêted, and glorified, while she was still living. He was himself almost a saint in the opinion of the people. The monks everywhere said, that since the days

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\* When "The Monk" of Lewis appeared, in 1796, it was little expected that this terrible romance would be surpassed by a real history. Yet such is the case in Llorente's History of the Inquisition.

of the ever-blessed Jean de la Croix, there had not been in Spain a man so austere and penitent as he. According to the custom of designating illustrious Doctors by a surname, such as the Angelic, the Seraphic, he was called the *Ecstatic*. Stronger than the Mother, he survived the torture, while she died there. He confessed nothing, except that he had received the money for twelve thousand eight hundred masses which he had never celebrated; and he was disposed of by being sent to the convent De Duruelo.



## CHAPTER XI.

*No More Systems.—An Emblem.—The Sacred Heart.—Marie Alacoque.—Equivoque of the Sacred Heart.—The Seventeenth Century is the Century of Equivoque.—Chimerical Policy of the Jesuits.—Father La Colombière and Marie Alacoque, 1675.—Papist Conspiracy in England.—First Altar of the Sacred Heart, 1685.—Ruin of the Gallicans, 1693.—Of the Quietists, 1698.—Of Port Royal, 1709.—Theology of Annihilation in the Eighteenth Century.—Jesuit Art.*

QUIETISM, so much accused of obscurity, had been only too clear. It had erected into a system, and stated with frankness as the supreme perfection, the state of immobility and helplessness to which the soul arrives at length when it renounces its activity.

Was it not simplicity to write so distinctly that doctrine of inanition—to make so much noise about a theory of slumber? Talk not so loud, if you wish people to sleep! See how the instinct indicated in that caution guided theologians who were at the same time *men of business*. They cared nothing about theology, they wished only for results.

It is proper to do the Jesuits the justice to acknowledge that, at bottom, they were sufficiently indifferent to speculative opinions. We have seen that after Pascal's Letters the Jesuits themselves wrote against their own casuistry. Then they essayed Quietism. For a moment they permitted Fénélon to believe that they would sustain him. But, from the moment that Louis XIV. said, "they are making a plunge,"\* the Jesuits preached against their friend, and discovered forty errors in his *Maxims of the Saints*.

The Jesuits never had much success in becoming theolo-

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\* Bossuet, Letter of March 30, 1697.

gians. With *silence* they throve better than with all the systems. They induced the Pope to impose silence, at the commencement of the century, upon the Dominicans, and then afterwards upon the Jansenists. After this their affairs succeeded better. It was just at the moment when they had ceased to write (1687) that they obtained from the invalid king the list of benefits in his gift. Thus they became, to the astonishment of the Gallicans, who had believed themselves victors,—the kings of the clergy of France.

No more opinions, no more systems! They were weary of them. We have already noted the fatigue which had for a long time prevailed. There is a point, it may be remarked, in long lives, whether of men, of states, or of religions, where, having run from project to project, and from dream to dream, all thought becomes odious. In these profoundly material moments nothing is desired which is not tangible. Do people become exact and positive? No. But the age can return no more to the symbols which it adored in youth. The old dotard in second childhood seeks rather some new *fetish*—some palpable and manageable idol. The more gross it is, the better it succeeds.

This explains the prodigious success with which the Jesuits spread and made acceptable, at this time of lassitude, a new object of worship—very carnal, very material—the Heart of Jesus, shown by the open wound in his side, or torn and bleeding.

There was very nearly the same thing in the decrepitude of paganism. Religion took refuge in the taurobolium, in the bloody Mithraic expiation, in the worship of blood.

At the grand fête of the Sacred Heart, which the Jesuits gave in the last century, in the Coliseum at Rome, they struck a medal, with a device worthy of the solemnity: "It was given to feed the people in the amphitheatre of Titus."\*

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\* In 1774. *Des Sacres Cœurs*, by Tabaraud.

What a great advantage does the substitution of an emblem, a mute sign, for systems, give the friends of obscurity ! No equivocal expressed in words can compare, for producing indecision and confusion of ideas, with a material object which takes a thousand meanings. The old Christian symbols, so much had they been explained and translated, presented to the mind, wherever they were seen, a signification too clear. They are the grave symbols of death and of self-denial. The new emblem was more obscure. Bleeding, it is true, but carnal and passionate, it spoke less of death than of life. The heart palpitates, the blood reeks, and it is a living man, who, with his hands showing his wounds, invites us by signs to come and sound the ghastly aperture in his bosom.

The heart ! This word, alone, has always been powerful. The organ of the affections, the heart expresses them in its own manner,—it swells, it labours with the sigh. The strong and perplexed life of the heart comprehends and mingles all loves. Such a word bears wonderfully in a language the double meaning. Who could best comprehend it ? The women, for with them the heart is all. The heart has been the subject of the great modern devotion for nearly two hundred years. Another subject occupied, during two hundred years, the thought of the middle ages.

It was a strange thing that in that era of *spiritualism* a long discussion, public, solemn, took place in all the schools, the churches, the pulpits of Europe, upon a subject of which no one ventures now to speak, except in the schools of Medicine. That subject was—the *Conception!*\* Let one imagine to himself all these Monks, people vowed to celibacy, Dominicans, Franciscans, boldly pursuing this subject, teaching it to everybody ; preaching anatomy to children and little girls, and occupying their minds with the most secret mys-

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\* See among other books, that of Gravois : *De Ortu et Progressu cultus Immaculati conceptus*, 1764. 4to.

teries, with most disgusting detail, impossible to quote, and hardly fit to refer to.

But the Heart has the advantage of furnishing a crowd of expressions of a doubtful sense—a whole language of tender equivoques, which may be heard and uttered without blushing, and which facilitate the artifices of devout gallantry.

In the commencement of the seventeenth century the directors and confessors found in the Sacred Heart a convenient subject. But the women took it up in all seriousness. They soared into the exaltation of passion, and were visited with visions. The Virgin appeared to a peasant of Normandy, and ordered him to adore the *Heart of the Mary*.<sup>\*</sup> The Visitandines instituted sisterhoods of the *Heart of Jesus*. The sisters of the Visitandines did not fail to see the Divine Spouse in visions. Marie Alacoque saw the Sacred Heart and the bleeding wound.

She was a strong girl, very sanguine, from whom they were obliged incessantly to take blood. She entered the convent at twenty-four years of age, with strong passions. Her infancy had not been enervated with confinement, as it happens to those who are shut up at an early age. Her devotion was outright ardent love, which made her willing to suffer for the loved object. Having heard that Madame Chantal imprinted on her heart, with a hot iron, the name of Jesus, she did the same thing. Her imagination, in answer to this devotion, represented the Divine Lover as not insensible to it, and he visited her. It was with the knowledge, and under the direction of a clever superior, that M<sup>lle</sup> Alacoque had these intimate interviews with the Divine Spouse. She celebrated her espousals with him, a regular marriage contract

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<sup>\*</sup> Eudes, brother of Mezerai, founder of the Eudistes, wrote the life of that peasant, and was the true founder of the new worship of the Sacred Heart. The Jesuits took up the thing, and profited by it. (See *Tabarand*.) I have sought in vain for the manuscript work of Eudes in all the libraries. It has been made to disappear.



was drawn up by the superior, and M'lle Alacoque signed it with her blood. One day, when she had, says her biographer, taken up with her tongue the eructations of a sick woman, she was permitted to place her lips to one of the Divine wounds.\*

In all this there was nothing of theology. M'lle Alacoque was a girl of ardent temperament, who magnified celibacy. There was nothing of the mystic in her, in the proper sense of the term. Happier than Madame Guyon, who never saw him whom she loved, she saw and touched the body of the Divine Lover. The heart which he showed her in his open breast was a bleeding muscle. The extreme plethora of blood from which she suffered, and which frequent bleedings could not relieve, filled her imagination with visions of blood.

The Jesuits, the grand propagators of this new devotion, were very cautious not to explain precisely whether they intended to render homage to a symbolical heart, a celestial love, or to adore the heart of flesh. When pressed to explain, they replied differently, according to persons, times, and places. One of their order, Father Galiffet, made two different replies at the same moment. At Rome, he said that he intended the symbolical heart; at Paris, he printed that there was no metaphor in the matter: that he adored the very flesh.†

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\* No legend is more carefully collected than this. Vide *Languet*, *Galiffet*, and others.

The translator has shuddered at the impiety, and has been shocked at the awful and disgusting repulsiveness of many passages which have preceded, and many which will follow this; and he has endeavoured in rendering to avoid every thing which could be avoided, and still preserve something like a picture, though confessedly a faint one, of the original. On the other hand, a fearless exposure of the iniquity of substituting man's inventions—horrible inventions—for Christianity, is due alike to the subject and to the argument of the author. For further remarks see preface.

† The two replies may be read on pages 35 and 73 of Tabaraud *Des Sacres Cœurs*.

The equivoque made the fortune of the new worship. In less than forty years, there were formed in France four hundred and twenty-eight confreries of the *Sacre Cœur*. I cannot avoid pausing a moment to admire the triumph of equivoque through this whole century.

On whatever side I look, I find it: everywhere, in all things and all persons. The equivoque is on the throne, with Madame Maintenon, seated near the king, while princesses stand before her,—is she a queen, or is she not? The equivoque is near the throne, in that humble Father La Chaise, true king of the clergy of France, who, from a garret at Versailles, distributes benefices. Our Gallicans, so loyal; the Jansenists, so scrupulous, do they abstain from equivoque? Obedient, and rebellious; making war upon their knees, they kiss the foot of the Pope, while they strive to tie his hands; they spoil their better reasons by the “*distinguo*” and their false colours.

In truth, when I put in contrast with the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, this Janus-faced seventeenth, the two first mentioned seem to me very honest centuries; they were sincere, at least, in their good and in their evil. But the seventeenth, with its majestic harmony, how it covers over and conceals things false and foul! All is sweetened, made gentler in its appearance, but at the bottom is often worse. To replace the local inquisitions, you have the police of the Jesuits, armed with the power of the king. For one St. Bartholomew, you have the long, the immense religious revolution, which is called the Revocation of the Edict of Nantz, that cruel comedy of forced conversions; and then the unheard-of tragedy of a proscription, organized by all the military and bureaucratic means of a modern government. Bossuet chants the triumph. Falsehood, artifice, misery, are everywhere visible: the false in politics, the local life destroyed, without the creation of a central; the false in man-

ners—that polite court, that world of honest people, unexpectedly received one day in the *chamber of poisons*, the king suppressing the process, lest he should find them all culpable!\* And devotion, how could that be true amid such manners? If you reproach the sixteenth century with its violent fanaticism, and if the eighteenth appears to you cynical and without respect for humanity, acknowledge also that falsehood, art, and hypocrisy are the ruling features of the seventeenth. The great historian, Molière, has drawn the portrait of the age, and found its name—*Tartuffe*.

To return to the Sacred Heart. In truth, in speaking of equivoue, we can hardly be said to have made a digression from it, since it is in this era the illustrious and ruling example of equivoue. The Jesuits generally have invented little; they did not discover this, but they saw at a glance, when it appeared, the profit that might be drawn from it. We have seen how, by degrees, all the time professing that they did not regard female convents, they rendered themselves masters of them. The Visitation was especially under their influence.† The superior of Marie Alacoque, who possessed her confidence and directed her communications with the Divine Spouse, early advised Father La Chaise.

The thing had come to a point. The Jesuits had need of a popular machine, which they could work for the advancement of their policy. It was at this moment that they believed that England—at least so they said to the king—sold by Charles II., was ready for open and entire conversion. Intrigue, money, and women were all employed. To king

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\* All this will appear in the important publication relative to the prisons of the State, prepared by M. Ravaisson, the elder, of the Library of the Arsenal.

† To such an extent, that the Visitandines, the children of the good St. Francis, made themselves, for the Jesuits, the guardians and jailers of the female inmates of Port Royal, at the time of their dispersion.

Charles they gave mistresses—to his brother, confessors. The Jesuits who, in their knavery, are often chimerical, believed, that in gaining over five or six noblemen, they were about to change all that protestant mass—protestant, not from belief only, but from interest and habits of life—protestant at the heart, and with English tenacity.

See then these great politicians, stealing along with the pace of a wolf, and imagining that they were going to carry their purpose by surprise. An essential point with them was to place near the king's brother, James, a secret preacher, who, in his private chapel, might attempt some conversions. To fill this part, a man, fascinating, and, above all, ardent and fanatical, was necessary, but such men were not then common. The young man whom La Chaise had in view lacked fanaticism and ardour. It was one La Colombière, who taught rhetoric in the Jesuit's College, at Lyons. An agreeable preacher,\* an elegant writer, a good subject, sweet and docile, there needed in his character to serve the Jesuits only a little madness. To give him that, they approached him with M<sup>lle</sup> Alacoque. He was sent to Paray-lemonial, where she was, as confessor extraordinary of the Jesuits, in 1675. He was twenty-four years of age, she twenty-eight. Thoroughly prepared by her superior, she recognised in him the great servant of God, who had been promised her in her visions. From the first day she saw in the Sacred Heart, her heart united to that of the Jesuit.

La Colombière, of a gentle and weak nature, was carried, without resistance, into this whirlwind of passion and fanaticism. They kept him a year and a half in this furnace. Then, all glowing, they tore him from Paray, and threw him into England. They were still a little distrustful of him, and

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\* His sermons are feeble. His *Retraites Spirituelles* are more curious. It is the journal of a young Jesuit endeavouring to exalt his spirit into fanaticism, which, one perceives, had already become difficult.



fearing that he might cool, from time to time, they sent him some ardent and inspired lines, which Marie Alacoque dictated, and her superior wrote.

La Columbière remained two years in England, at the residence of the Duchess of York, so completely concealed and carefully shut up that he never even saw London. They mysteriously conducted to him certain of the nobility who thought it would be serviceable to themselves to be converted to the religion of the brother of the king, the heir presumptive. England having at length detected this Popish conspiracy, La Columbière was accused, brought before Parliament, and sent back to France. He returned ill, and his managers sent him to Paray to see if the nun could restore him, but he died there of fever.

However little we may be disposed to believe in great results from insignificant causes, we cannot help acknowledging that the miserable intrigue of which we have spoken had upon France and the world an incalculable effect. The politicians wished to gain England, and approached her, not by the Gallicans, whom she esteemed, but by the Jesuits whom she abhorred. At the very moment when the Romish Church owed it to herself, as a matter of prudence at least, to remove the idolatries with which the Protestants reproached her, she added a new one, of a sickening character, the carnal and sensual devotion of the Sacred Heart. To mingle horror and farce, in 1685, the year sadly memorable of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantz, Marie Alacoque dressed the first of the altars which cover all France. We have noticed how England, confirmed by the Jesuits in Protestantism and horror of Rome, obtained a king from Holland, and, thus connecting Holland with herself by the union of these two maritime powers, obtained the dominion of the seas. The Jesuits may boast of having solidly established Protestantism in England. All the arguments in the world cannot change that fact.

Their political work, as we have thus seen, was important. It abetted the marriage of England and Holland, and killed France.

In their religious work, what did they effect in France during the last days of Louis XIV.? What was the last employment of the powerful La Chaises and Telliers? It was the destruction of Port Royal—a military expedition to capture fifteen old women, drag the dead from the earth, and commit sacrilege by the warrant of Jesuit authority.\* That dying authority, which, in the terrible year of 1709, seemed to overpower the throne and the kingdom, they exerted in haste, to destroy their enemies.†

Port Royal was extinguished in 1709; Quietism had reached its end in 1698, and even Gallicanism, the great royal religion, had been laid at the feet of the Pope, by the King, in 1693. Bossuet rests in the tomb by the side of Fenelon, and not far from them reposes Arnaud. Victors and vanquished, all sleep in the common silence of the tomb.

The emblem prevailing, and taking the place of all system, the need of analysing, of explaining, and of thinking even,

\* See the detail in the Historical Memoirs of Port Royal, (1756,) and in the General History, (1757.)

† The Jesuits pursue them with rage even now, especially those sisters whom they suspect of Jansenism. The Jansenists wish to suffer and die in silence, and do not desire that we complain for them. But history cannot associate itself with martyrs in this resignation. History will mention, as a fact most curious and little known, the excellent Review (*Revue Ecclesiastique, rue St. Severin*) which the Jansenists publish in a small edition for themselves. In that they reply with force and moderation to the ill-timed declamations which Pere Ravignan made in St. Severin, (1842,) against Port Royal. In that they expose ultramontane novelties, which the Jesuit preaches. Who could have believed that while persecuting and outraging the Jansenists, the Jesuit party would have dared (in the Chamber of Peers) to claim the renown of illustrious Jansenists as theirs—that of Rollin for example! Are they the heirs of those whom they assassinate?

grew less and less. Upon this the Jesuits felicitated themselves. The explanation presumed was always that most favourable to the Jesuits—that is to say, deference to liberty of the mind. In the shadow of an obscure emblem they can sleep, without making formularies and giving their opponents a chance to seize them. They apply, with indifference, the practical rules of all abandoned theories, following and concurring in them according to the interest of the hour.

Wise policy—beautiful wisdom, which conceals its own nothingness. But in dispensing others from the duty of reasoning, they lost the capacity themselves; and in the day of peril they were without arms. The great polemical contest of the last century found them mute. Voltaire discharged a hundred thousand arrows without waking them. Rousseau crushed and bruised them, without drawing from them a word in reply.

Who could answer? Theology was *ignored* by theologians.\* The persecutors of the Jansenists mingle up, in the books published in the name of Marie Alacoque, Jansenist and Molinist opinions, as if they had never disputed them.† They wrote, in 1708, the Manual, which has been since adopted as the basis of instruction in our seminaries; and this manual contains the entirely new doctrine, that at each new papal decision the Pope is *inspired* by Heaven to decide, and the bishops are *inspired* to obey. All is *oracular* or *miraculous* under this gross system: reason was completely extinguished by theology. There was little dogmatism from that time, and less of sacred history. Teaching would have been a nul-

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\* This ignorance is singularly apparent even now. What a curious spectacle to see a man rise before the highest ecclesiastical authority and solemnly deliver a sermon which is one heresy from beginning to end. The adversaries of their theology are the only persons whom the Jesuits appear to remember.

† Tabaraud *Des Sacres Cœurs*.

lity, if the old casuistry had not come in to fill up the void with immoral subtleties.

The world to which the Jesuits have for a long time addressed themselves—that of women—is the world of sensibility. Nothing of science is necessary there—impressions are desired rather than ideas. The less the mind is occupied with ideas, the easier is it to shut it up from the world without, and to keep it ignorant of the progress of the times.

In a path where sanctity consists in destroying the mind, the more material is the worship, the better is that purpose answered. The more the mind is weakened and lowered, the higher it becomes. Make salvation depend upon the exercise of the moral virtues, and you make the exercise of reason necessary. But what need have we of reason? Wear this medal, “it will efface your crimes.”\* Reason would still have a share in Religion, if it was necessary, as Reason teaches us absolutely to love God; but Marie Alacoque has seen that it is sufficient *not to hate him*. The devotees of the Sacred Heart are saved without condition.

When the Jesuits were suppressed, they had in their hands no religious means except those of Paganism, and there they place their hopes of resuscitation. They have made stamps with this motto: “I will give them the shield of my Heart.”

The Popes, who at first were uneasy at the opening which such materialism gave to the attacks of the philosophers,† are better advised in our days. Materialism may be very useful in addressing a world which reads very little philosophy, and which, to be devout, need not be the less material. Rome

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\* The medal of the Immaculate Conception, made under the auspices of M. de Quélen, has already saved assassins and other criminals. See the Notice by a Lazarist, and the passages which are cited from it by M. Genin, *Les Jésuites et l'Université*.

† Lambertini, *De Servorum Dei beatificatione*. One is pained to see a man of mind and sense labour and strain to be only one-half absurd.



has therefore retained the precious equivoque of the ideal heart and the heart of flesh. We have forbidden any explication of the question whether the words Sacred Heart designate the love of God for man, or a piece of bleeding flesh.\* By reducing the *thing* to an *idea*, they would deprive it of the passionate attraction which has given it success. In the last century, some of the bishops advanced a step further, declaring that the flesh itself is the principal object in this worship, and they even placed it in certain hymns, *after the Trinity, as a fourth person!*

Priests, women, young girls, have vied with each other in this devotion to the Sacred Heart. I have in my hands a manual, widely circulated throughout the country, in which members of the *confreries* are taught that, praying each for the others, they associate their hearts, and these united hearts "should desire to enter into the aperture of the heart of Jesus, and bury themselves incessantly in that affectionate wound."

The confreries in their manuals have sometimes been gallant enough to put the heart of Mary above that of Jesus. (See that of Nantz, 1769.) Generally, in these pictures, she is younger than her son. She is twenty, for example, and he thirty, so that, at the first glance, he seems less a son than a husband or a lover. This year, even, at Rouen, in St. Owen, in the chapel of the Sacred Heart, I saw a design which some young girls had made with a pen, and which is approved by the ecclesiastical authority—Jesus on his knees before the virgin!

The strongest satire of the Jesuits is that which they have published of themselves, in the pictures and statues inspired by their spirit. Their taste has been wittily characterized

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\* Pius VI. condemned the council of Pistoia, which had attempted to draw the distinction.

by the severe saying of Poussin, whose painting of Christ did not please them: "An artist cannot imagine a Christ *with the visage of a wry neck, or of Father Douillet*;" and yet Poussin saw the taste of the Jesuits for the arts in its better days. What would he have said if he could have seen what has followed—that decrepit coquetry which multiplies smiles, grimaces, leers, and dying eyes! The worst is, that those who have no other idea than the flesh, know not how to represent it. The idea becomes more and more inane and material. Form is effaced, and from picture to picture the fall increases—ignoble, foppish, lascivious, leering, dull, expressionless!\*

Like art, like men. It is difficult to augur well of the souls of those who inspire such art, recommend such pictures, put them everywhere in their churches, and circulate them by thousands and millions. Such a taste is a grave sign. Many immoral people retain still some sense of the beautiful. But the souls of those must be of the basest, who dwell willingly on the ignoble and the false.

One truth strikes us here, which all must recognise. It is that Art is the only thing inaccessible to falsehood. Son of the heart, of sincere inspiration, it endures no alliance with falsehood. It will not permit itself to be violated; and if the False triumphs, it dies. Every thing else the Jesuits imitated and played with. They could make a theology for the sixteenth, and a morality for the seventeenth century; but an

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\* In 1834, occupied with Christian iconography, I went through the pictures of Christ in the Royal Library. Those published during the last thirty years are the most humiliating things I have ever seen for art, and for human nature. Every man, believer or philosopher, who has preserved any sentiment of religion, must feel indignant. All improprieties, sensualities, and base passions are there—the pale young student, the licentious priest, the robust cure, who looks *à la Maingrat*. The engraver must have done his work with a pointed stick, in the sand.

art—Never! They could counterfeit the Holy and the Just :  
—How counterfeit the Beautiful? Thou art ugly, poor Tartuffe! Ugly must thou remain! It is thy badge. Aim ever at the beautiful—thou canst never reach it. That would be impiety above all impiety. THE BEAUTIFUL is the aspect of the DEITY.

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NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR. The argument in the last paragraph is more than a little specious. The theology of the Jesuits, by the author's own showing, was as far from true theology, and their morality as far from true morality, as their pictures (bad enough no doubt) are from an educated man's idea of beauty. The Jesuits simulate art quite as well as they do Theology or Morality. Reformers discovered the counterfeits and exposed them. The paintings under notice follow naturally (as Michelet has shown in this same connection) from corrupted hearts: how then does he say that there is a better imitation in the one case than the other? The pictures and images are part of the machinery of corruption, and answer their purpose better, no doubt, than if they were gems of art.





## PART SECOND.

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### OF DIRECTION IN GENERAL, AND PARTICULARLY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

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#### CHAPTER I.

*Resemblances and Differences between the seventeenth and nineteenth Centuries.—Christian art.—It is we who have raised up the Church.—What it adds to the Power of the Priest.—The Confessional.*

Two objections may be made against what I am about to say. I will relate them.

First. "The examples are taken from the seventeenth century: a time in which direction was influenced by theological questions, which now engage the attention of neither the world nor the church: for instance—the question of Grace, and of the Will—the question of Quietism, or of repose in love." I have replied in advance to this. These questions are obsolete, dead, if you please, as theories; but in spirit and the methodical practice derived from those theories, they are, and always will be living. We shall no longer find speculative persons simple enough to frame a doctrine of sleep and moral annihilation; but we shall always find quacks enough to practice the art of the Quietists. If this is not clear enough, I will, in a moment, throw more light upon it, than will be desired.

Second. Another difficulty. "Are the examples which you draw from the books and letters of the great men in a great age, conclusive for our own? Have not those profound and subtle spirits who carried so far the science of the government of souls, given it thus with a subtlety, of which the vulgar herd

of confessors and directors cannot even have an idea? What have you to fear like it, from the poor and simple priests whom we now have? Where are, I ask you, our holy Francis of Sales, our Bossuets, our Fenelons? Do you not perceive, that the clergy no longer not only does not contain in its ranks men of such genius, but that it has generally, and as a class, become lowered? The great majority of the priests, spring from the families of peasants. Even the peasant who is not poor, finds it convenient to ease his family by placing a son in the seminary. The first education, that which is received from parents before all other education, is totally wanting to him. The seminary does not repair this inconvenience of his origin and original condition. If we are to judge from those who have come from the hands of the Sulpicians, Lazarists, &c., we shall be tempted to believe that there is, among the leaders, a party who purposely send out priests of mediocre mind, and therefore the more dependant and blind in their obedience to the impulses (against their own real interests) which they have received in their education. What then do you fear? Is not this intellectual abasement of the clergy an assurance to you. How will they follow in the confessional and direction the learned tactics of the priests of former times? The dangers which you dread are imaginary."

It is easy to reply.

Distinction of mind, great cultivation, are not so necessary as is thought, to govern souls which are willing to be ruled. Authority, character, the place, costume, give strength to the priest, and supply in him that which is wanting in the man. It is less by skill than by consequences and perseverance, that he obtains an ascendancy. If his mind is but slightly cultivated, he is less distracted by the variety of new ideas which unceasingly traverse us men of modern times—amuse and fatigue us. He has fewer ideas, views, and projects, but one interest, one end, and that always the same; which he follows up unceasingly; the sure means of obtaining it.

Will it be said that because a man is a peasant he has the less art? Peasants are prudent people, frequently full of astuteness, of an indefatigable constancy in following up some small interest. See how many years, what different methods, methods frequently oblique, one of them will employ to add two feet to his land. Do you think that his son Monsieur the curé, will be less patient, less ardent in gaining a soul, in influencing woman, in entering a family?

These peasant races have frequently a certain tartness, which belongs to the blood, to the temperament, which gives them ingenuity. Those of the South especially, from whence the clergy make their principal recruits, furnish intrepid speakers who have no need of knowledge, and who, from their very ignorance, are perhaps in more direct affinity with the simple persons whom they address. They speak loudly, boldly, and strongly; well-informed persons would be more reserved, less fitted to fascinate the weak; they would not dare to attempt so boldly, a coarse magnetism in spiritual matters.

Here, I should confess, that there is a great difference between our century and the seventeenth, in which the clergy of all parties were so cultivated. That cultivation, those vast studies, that great theological and literary activity, were for the priests then, the most powerful distraction in the midst of temptation—science, or at least controversy and dispute, created for him, in a situation frequently very worldly, a kind of solitude, an *alibi*—if we may so speak, which preserved him—and how much need of virtue have ours, who have nothing of all that; who spring from strong and material races, and who do not know how to employ this embarrassing force.

The great men from whom we constantly adduce our examples, had a marvellous defence against spiritual and carnal concupiscence, or what is better than defence, wings, which in a critical moment raised them from the earth above the reach of temptation. By these wings I mean, the love of God, the

love which genius has of itself; its natural effort to remain high and to ascend, the horror which it has of descending.

The chiefs of the clergy of France, the only one which was then alive responsible to the world, which drew its faith from them—they had a courage equal to this great part. A single thought was the guardian of their life, a thought which they repressed, but which none the less sustained them in their delicate trials—it was, that in them dwelt the church.

Their great experience, both of the world and the inward life,\* that skillful management of men and things, far from weakening morality, as might be believed, rather aided it with them, by putting them in a position always to perceive and foresee perils, to see their enemy approaching; and, by not giving him the advantage of unforeseen attacks, to know how at least to elude him. Thus it was that Bossuet arrested at once the soft confidence of a weak nun. The little which we have said of the direction of Fenelon, shows sufficiently how the dangerous director glided among the dangers.

Those persons eminently spiritual, could pursue during long years between heaven and earth, that tender dialectics of the love of God. Is such the case now with people who have no wings, who walk and do not fly? Incapable of pursuing those ingenious circuits by which passion sported, eluding itself, do they not incur the danger of falling at the first step?

I know well that by the absence of that early education, of which we but now spoke, vulgarity or awkwardness frequently raise a barrier between the priest and a delicate woman. Many things, however, which would not be permitted in another, are regarded as meritorious in him. His

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\* There is another difference between them and the clergy of our day. These latter understand neither precedents nor varieties, nor times nor persons. Whenever they leave their underhand dealing, they become disgusting, rude, and violent; they strike at random; they fall upon the passer by, who is forced to combat them.



stiffness is austerity; his awkwardness the simplicity of a holy man who has lived in a desert. Other and more indulgent rules are applied to him than to a layman. He derives advantage from his character, costume, the place, and that mysterious church which lends a poetic reflection even to the most vulgar.

Who has given them this last advantage? Ourselves. It is we who, in our candor, have raised up, rebuilt the churches which they in some sort forgot. The priest raised St. Sulpice and other piles of stones; the laity have discovered for him Notre Dame, St. Ouen. They have shown him the Christian spirit in living stones,\* and he has not perceived it; they have taught it to him, and he has not comprehended it.—And how long has the mistake lasted? Not less than forty years, ever since the appearance of the “*Genius of Christianity*.” The priest was unwilling to believe us, when we explained to him this sublime house; he did not recognize it. Why are you astonished? It only belongs to those who have understood it.†

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\* Allow me to be permitted to recall, against many silly attacks, two things which I have done for the art of the past age. 1st. *I have explained the principle and the life*, which my illustrious predecessors in this career, neither Germans nor French have done; 2d. *I have explained its ruin*, indicated the causes of decay which this art carried in itself. I have admired it, but I have disposed of it without allowing myself to be carried away by an exclusive admiration. See my *History of France*, (1833,) in the last chapter of the second volume, and particularly in the last ten pages. In that same chapter I committed a grievous error, which I should rectify. In speaking of ecclesiastical celibacy, (a propos of Gregory the 7th,) I said that married men would never have been able to build those sublime monuments, that arrow of Strasburg, &c. It is, on the contrary, discovered that the architects of the Gothic churches were laymen, most frequently married men. He of Strasburg, Edwin of Steinback, had a celebrated daughter, Sabina, who was herself an artist.

† And those who have understood it are the only ones who respect and regret it. If we were the mortal enemies of these churches, we would do that which is now going on, we would take from them every thing which renders them venerable, their old color, the moss of past ages, the

He has, however, thought better of it at last. He has found it politic and useful like us, to praise Christian architecture. He has adorned himself with his own church, he has re-enveloped himself in this glorious mantle, he places himself there triumphantly. The crowd comes, sees, admires—certainly if we are to judge of a well dressed man by his garment, he who clothes himself with a Notre Dame of Paris, or a Cathedral of Cologne, is the giant of the spiritual world. Alexander, on his departure for India, wishing to deceive posterity with regard to the stature of his Macedonians, caused them to trace out a camp, in which the place of each man was ten feet. What a place is this church! What a dwelling, and what an immense host ought to reside in it! Phantasmagoria adds still to its grandeur. Every proportion is changed. The deceived eye deceives itself—sublime lights, deep shadows—every thing favors the illusion. The man who, by his vulgar mien, you would take in the streets for a village schoolmaster, is here a prophet. He is transfigured by this gilded frame; his dullness becomes strengthened majesty; his voice has formidable echoes. The woman and the child fear him.

When that woman returns to her own home, every thing is prosaic and common place. Had she for a husband a *Pi  re Cornielle*, if he inhabits the miserable house which is still shown as his, she took him out of pity. Intellectual greatness in a closet will never strike her. She compares and she is sad, severely mild. Her patient husband smiles, or appears to do so. “Her director has turned her head,” he says

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mutilations. We would efface all that; we would place in them the statues of every age, as it is wished to be done at Notre Dame, and we would make museums of them. The church has resisted revolutions and time; it will not resist the conspiracy of the mason and the priest. The mason has induced the priest to believe that he was making it Gothic in 1845. It is these two who pilfer, overthrow, and demolish the old Gothic, being sure to make a new one.

aloud, and in a low voice to himself, "after all she only sees him at church." But what place, I pray you, is more powerful to the imagination than a church, richer in illusions, more fascinating? It is indeed the church which enobles a man who is elsewhere vulgar, which magnifies, exaggerates him, lends to him its poetry.

Do you see that solemn figure, which beneath the gold and purple of the priestly robes, mounts, with the thoughts of the people, amid the prayers of ten thousand men, the triumphal station of the choir of St. Dennis? Do you still see him, who high above all this kneeling crowd, mounts to the height of the ceiling, carries his head among the chapiters, among the winged heads of the angels, and from thence lanches the thunder-bolt?—Well, it is he himself—this terrible archangel, who daily descends for her, and now mild and gentle comes below, into that obscure chapel, to listen to her during the languishing hours of the afternoon. . . . Beautiful hour! Sporting and tender, (and why does the heart beat so strongly here?) . . . The church is already dark! it is not, however, late. The great rose of the door glistens in the setting sun. . . . But it is different in the choir; deep shadows there extend themselves, and behind is darkness. . . . One thing astonishes and almost alarms us, though we regard it from afar; it is, from the very depth of the church, that mystery of the old windows, which, no longer showing an exact design, sparkle in the shade like an illegible conjurer's book of unknown characters. . . . The chapel is none the less obscure: you can distinguish no longer the ornaments, the delicate tracery which unites itself with the roof; the thickening shadow confounds all forms. But, as if this dark chapel was not already dark enough, it contains in one corner a narrow nook of black oak, where this excited man, this trembling woman, placed so near each other, speak in a low voice of the love of God!

## CHAPTER II.

*The Confessional.—The actual Education of the Young Confessor.—The Confessor of the Middle Ages.—1st. He Believed.—2d. He Mortified Himself.—3d. He was Superior by Education.—4th. He knew less how to Question.—The Casuists wrote for their own Times.—The Rocks of the Young Confessor.—How he strengthens his tottering Position.*

A WORTHY parish priest has frequently told me, that the sore of his state, his despair with himself, and the torment of his life, was the confessional.

The studies by which they are prepared at the seminaries are such, that the temperament frequently perishes there, the body sickens beneath it, the soul remains enervated and depraved.

A laical education which does not make any pretensions to excessive purity, and whose pupils will live one day an ordinary life; takes, however, great care to avert from the eyes of a young man, the too seducing images which trouble the senses. The ecclesiastical education, which pretends to make men more than men; pure virgin spirits, angels; fixes the attention of its pupils upon things which will always be interdicted to them, and gives them as objects of study, terrible temptations enough to ruin all the saints. Their printed books have been cited; but the manuscripts, by which the education of the seminaries during the last two years is completed, have not been cited; these manuscripts contain matter that the boldest have never dared to publish.

I cannot reproduce here that which has been revealed to me in regard to this senseless education by those who have suffered and almost perished by it. No one can picture to himself the state of that young man, still a believer and sincere, struggling between the terrors and temptations by which he is



surrounded—designedly, between two unknown things, either of which is sufficient to set him crazy, *woman* and *perdition*, and still constrained unceasingly, to look into the abyss—giddy, over those shameless books, with the temperament and warmth of youth.

This unheard of imprudence came originally from the scholastic supposition, that we could perfectly isolate the soul and body. They believed they could guide them, like coursers of different gaits, the one to the right, the other to the left. They did not dream that in this case, it would be with a man, as with the chariot sculptured in the pediment of the Louvre, which drawn two ways, must, without doubt, go to pieces. How different soever may be the nature of the two substances, is it not most perceptible that they are mingled in action? There is not a movement of the soul which does not act upon the body, and the body re-acts on it. The most cruel war upon the body, will kill the body more easily than it will prevent its action on the soul. Is it not then a puerile thing to think, that a vow, some prayers, and a black robe on the back, will deliver you from the frailties of the flesh, and make you a pure spirit?

They will offer as an objection, that crowd of men of the middle ages, who lived a life of mortification.

To this I have not one answer, but twenty, and they without reply. It is very easy to show, that the priest in general and particularly the confessor, were not then what they have been during the last two centuries.

1st. The first reply will be perhaps harsh; *then the priest was a believer.* —“How—does the priest no longer believe? would you say, that when speaking of his faith with so much energy, he is an hypocrite and a liar?” No; I heartily wish, he may be sincere; but there are many degrees of faith.—It is related that Lope de Vega, (who as we know was a priest,) could not officiate; at the moment of the sacrifice, he pictured to himself in too lively a manner the passion, burst into tears, and became sick. Compare this now with the coquettish pan-

tomine of the Jesuit, who trifles with the mass at Fribourg, or with the prelate whom I have seen pre-occupied with exhibiting his small white hand at the altar.

The priest believed, and *his penitent believed*. Unheard-of terrors, miracles, devils, hell, filled the church. The words "God hears," was not only graven on the wood, but in the heart. It was not a plank which separated the confessional, but the sword of the archangel, the thought of the judgment.

2d. If the priest spoke in the name of the Spirit, he had some right to do so, having purchased the spiritual power *by the suicide of the body*. Long prayers by night were not sufficient to do so, but they provided for it more directly by excessive fasting. Fasting was the regimen of those poor and rude schools of Mendicants, Cappets, &c., whose famished table was kept alive by arguments. Half dead before the age of manhood, they cooled their blood by herbs of mortal coldness, and exhausted themselves by bleeding. The number of bleedings to which the monks were subjected, was provided for in their rules. The stomach was soon destroyed, and the strength was never more recruited. St. Bernard and St. Theresa were weakened by continual vomitings; the sense of taste even was lost; the holy father, says his biographer, drank blood for beer. The word, *mortification*, was not then a vain word; there was not only an isolation of body and soul, but even the suppression of the body.

3d. The priest believed himself, in this sense, to be the man of the Spirit, and he was so effectively *by the superiority of his education*. He knew every thing; others, nothing. Even when the priest was young, he was truly the father, the other was the child—now, the reverse is the case; the layman, he of the cities at least, is generally better informed than the priest; even the peasant, who has a family, and interests or business to look after, or who has passed through the army, has more experience than his curate, more real knowledge; if he speaks worse, that is of no consequence. The contrast is

still greater when this unexperienced priest, who now has known nothing but the seminary, sees at his knees a woman of the world, of intrigue, of passion, who at the age of thirty-five, for example, has discovered all that exists in sentiments and ideas. What! it is she who asks advice from him; it is she who calls him "my father." But each word that she speaks, is a revelation to him: he is astonished, inwardly alarmed. If he has not wisdom to keep quiet, he will say absurd things. His penitent, who came much moved, goes away laughing.

4th. There is another difference, which will only be perceived by those who know the middle age; *language was not acute*, as it has since become. No one had then our habits of analysis and development; the confession was a mere declaration of sin, without a detail of circumstances. Still less could they deduce the phenomena which accompany passion, the desires, doubts, fears, which give to it the force of illusion and of mirage, and which render it contagious. There was, if one wished, the confessional; but the woman did not know how to speak, nor the confessor to listen; she could not open the true depths of her thoughts, and he did not know how to probe them. A vowal on one part, sentence on the other, was the whole. There was no dialogue, no confidence, no out-pouring of the heart.

If the priest has not enough imagination and mind to put questions, he has had in his hands for two centuries, the questions already put, which he will address by order, and by which he will force his penitent to seek out her thoughts, to dig out her own secret to give it up whole to him; to open her heart, fibre by fibre; thread by thread, if we may so speak, and to disentangle before him the whole skein, which since that time, he has held in his hands.

This terrible instrument of iniquity, which, in an unskillful hand, can soil the soul whilst probing it, ought, at least, to change with manners. Morality never changes, but manners

vary according to times; there is no doubt of this simple truth. They are the remains of the manners of the period, in which the intellectual movement ceased for them. The manuals which are placed in the hands of the young confessor, are sustained by the casuists whom Pascal has buried. If even the immorality of their solutions had not been demonstrated, deign to call to your recollection, that Escobar and Sanchez proposed questions for a period horribly corrupt, from which, thanks be to God, we are far removed. Their casuistry was addressed in its origin to a world of festering filth, which the religious wars left behind them. You will find in them such crimes as could never be committed except by the horrid soldiery of the Duke of Alba, or by those bands without country, law, or God, which Wallenstein raised, true wandering Sodomites, whom the old ones would have held in horror.

One knows not how to qualify this culpable practice. Those books made for a barbarous period, singular in its crimes, are the only ones which now, in full civilization, you give to your pupils!

And this young priest, who, according to you, believes that the world is still that frightful world; who comes to the confessional\* with all that villainous knowledge; his imagination furnished with monstrous cases; you place him, imprudent men, (or how shall I call you?) in contact with a child who has not left her mother, who knows nothing, has nothing to tell, whose greatest crime consists in not having learned her catechism well, or in having wounded a butterfly.

I shudder at the questions he is about to put to her; at all that he is about to *teach* her in his conscientious brutality! But, he has the excellence to ask her . . . She knows nothing, says nothing.—He scolds her, and she weeps. The tears will be soon dry, but she will ponder these things for a long time.

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\* Read those beautiful pages of P. L. Courier, and those of M. Genin, so spiritual, so eloquent, so ardent with the indignation of an honest man.



We might make a book upon the *debut* of a young priest; upon his imprudences, so grievous, so fatal for himself or others. The penitent is sometimes more wary than the confessor. She amuses herself with seeing him advance, she regards him coldly; he becomes excited, and advances too far.\* He who forgot himself in his passionate revery, is rudely awakened by the lesson which a witty and mocking woman gives him at her knees.

Cruel lesson, which causes him to feel the coldness of steel. One does not experience such a thing, without remaining for a long time embittered; sometimes bad for ever. This young priest knew well, that he was the victim, the disinherited of the world, but he had not perceived it. . . . Great gall mounts to his heart—He prays to God that the world may die (if perchance he yet prays to God.)

Then, turning to himself, and seeing himself without a remedy, in this black sheet, this robe of death, which he will carry to his grave, he sinks down cursing it. He considers what part he shall draw from his punishment.

And the only part to take, is to strengthen his position as a priest. There are two methods; by communication with the Jesuits, and by servile assiduity to my lord the Bishop. I recommend him above all things, to be violent against the philosophers, to bark at *pantheism*. Although he may thus blacken his fellow priests, he will the more whiten himself. Let him prove that he knows how to hate, and they will dispense with love in him.

His corps from henceforth protect, defend, cover him. He who would have been lost as an isolated priest, becomes holi-

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\* And why should not this excitement happen in such an interview? It is enough for persons of different sexes to pray together in the same room to induce intoxication and burn the brain. This happens in the assemblies of excited Protestants in the United States and elsewhere. Read the witty and judicious trifle of Swift's *Fragment in the Mechanical Operations of the Spirit*, especially toward the close of it.

ness itself as soon as he is a party man. He was about to be interdicted; sent perhaps for six months to La Trappe; he becomes a vicar general.

Only let him be prudent, in the delicate matters which the corps love to conceal; let him learn the arts of the priest; to feign, to wait, to know how to contain himself, to advance, but quietly, sometimes on the earth, but more frequently under it.

## CHAPTER III.

*The Confessional.—The Confessor and the Husband.—How the Wife becomes isolated.—The Director.—The Directors reunited.—The ecclesiastical Police.*

WHEN I think of all that is contained in the words, *confession, direction*, those little words, that great power, the most complete in the world; when I essay to analyse all that is in it, I am alarmed. It appears to me, that I am descending by an infinite spiral line of a deep and dark mine. I have had pity heretofore for the priest; now, I dread him.

We must not be alarmed; we must look it in the face. Let us frame with simplicity the language of the confessor.

“*God hears thee*; hears thee through me; by me God will reply to thee.” Such are the first words to the letter. The authority is accepted as infinite, absolute, without cavilling over the measure.

“But thou tremblest! thou darest not tell to this terrible God, thy weak and childish acts.—Well then, *tell them to thy father*; a father has a right to know the secrets of his child; an indulgent father, who only wishes to know them, in order to absolve them. He is a sinner like thyself; has he the right then to be severe? Come then child, come and speak.—That which thou hast never dared to whisper in thy mother’s ear, tell me; who will ever know it?”

Then, then among sighs from the swelling, throbbing breast, the fatal word mounts to the lips; it escapes, and is concealed. He who has heard it, has acquired a great advantage which he will preserve. God grant that he does not abuse it. He who has heard it—be careful—is not wood; the black oak of the old confessional; he is a man of flesh and blood.

And this man now knows of this woman, what the husband has never known in the long out-pouring of the heart by night and day ; that which her mother does not know, who believes that she knows her entirely, having held her so often naked on her knees.

This man knows ; he will know . . . Do not fear that he forgets. If the avowal is in good hands, so much the better, for it is for ever. . . . She also knows well, that she has a master over her inmost thoughts. She will never pass before that man without lowering her eyes.

The day on which this mystery was made common, he was very near her ; she felt his presence. . . . Seated above her, he weighed her down by an invisible ascendancy. A magnetic force conquered her, for she did not wish to speak, and yet, she spoke, in despite of herself. She was fascinated, like the bird before the serpent.

Up to this point, there was, perhaps, no art on the side of the priest. The force of things did all ; that of the religious institution, and that of nature. As a priest, he received her at his knees at the listening box. Then master of her secret, of her thought, of the thought of a woman, he has discovered himself to be a man ; and without wishing it, without perhaps knowing it, he has placed on her, feeble and disarmed, the heavy hand of a man.

And the family now ! the husband ! who will dare to say that his situation is the same as before ?

Every one who reflects, knows very well, that thought is in a person that which most controls him. The master of the thoughts, is he to whom the person belongs. The priest holds the soul as soon as he has the dangerous gage of the first secrets, and he will hold it faster and firmer. An entire division is made between the spouses, for now there are two ; the one has the soul, the other the body.

Note that in this division, one of the two has in truth every thing ; the other, if he keeps any thing, keeps it by grace.



Thought, from its very nature is dominant, absorbing; the master of the thought in the natural progress of his sway, will go on constantly subjecting the part which remains to the other. It will be already much, if the husband, widowed of the soul, preserves the involuntary, inert, and dead possession. Humiliating thing, only to obtain your own, but by permission and indulgence;\* to be seen, followed into the most intimate intimacy by an invisible witness who regulates you, and assigns to you your part. . . . to meet in the street a man who knows better than yourself your most secret acts of weakness, who humbly salutes you, turns aside and laughs!

It is nothing to be powerful, if one is not powerful alone, . . . alone! God does not divide.

It is the reason why the priest so certainly succeeds in his persevering efforts to isolate that woman; to weaken the bonds of family ties; to undermine a rival authority; I mean that of a husband. The husband weighs strongly against the priest. If this husband suffers by being so well known, watched, spied, he who watches him, although he is single, suffers still more. She proceeds at every moment to tell him, innocently, of things which place him beside himself. Frequently he would stop her; he would say to her willingly, "thanks Madame, there is too much." And although these details cause him to suffer as one of the damned, he even wishes still more of them; he exacts that she should descend with avowals humiliating for her and cruel for himself, to the saddest circumstances.

The confessor of a young woman can boldly define himself to be envious of the husband, and his secret enemy. If there is one who is an exception to this, (and I wish I could believe it,) he is a hero, a saint, a martyr, a man above a man.

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\* St. Francis of Sales, the best of all, had compassion on the poor husband. He takes away certain scruples of a woman, &c. This goodness even is here singularly humiliating. (See edition 1833, vol. viii. pp. 254, 312, 347, 348.) Marriage, which is a sacrament, here appears as if on its knees before the direction; it appears to ask pardon and make an apology.

All the labour of a confessor is to isolate this woman, and he does it conscientiously. It is the duty of him who leads her into the way of safety, to disengage her little by little from all the liens of earth. It requires time, patience, address. He does not endeavour to break at a blow such strong chains, but to discover at first of what threads each chain is composed, and thread by thread to wear it out, to rot it.

He rots and wears it away at his ease. Each day awakening new scruples, he disquiets a timid soul as to the legitimacy of the holiest attachments. If it is an innocent one, it is, however, after all, an earthly attachment—a robbery of God; God wishes all. No more relationship, no more friendship—nothing must remain. “A brother”—no, he is still a man. “But at least my sister my mother”—no; you must abandon all—abandon them with your soul and will; you will always see them, my daughter—nothing will appear changed—only close well your heart.”

A moral solitude is thus established all around. Friends find themselves rebuked by an icy politeness—it becomes chilly in that house. Why this strange reception? They cannot divine; she herself does not always know it—the thing is commanded; is not that sufficient? Obedience consists in obeying without reason.

All that they can say is, it is cold here. The husband finds his house larger and emptier; his wife has become entirely altered. Though present, she is absent in mind; she acts as if not acting; she speaks as if not speaking. Every thing is changed in their private habits, always for a good reason. “To-day it is a fast”—and to-morrow, “it is a festival.” The husband respects this austerity; he is scrupulous about troubling so lofty a devotion; he resigns himself sadly. “This is embarrassing,” said he; “I did not foresee it; my wife has become a saint.”

There are in this said house fewer friends; but there is one

more person, and he most assiduous. The habitual confessor is now the director.\* Great and considerable change!

As a confessor, he received her at the church at his own house. As a director, he visits her at his own hour; sees her at her own house, sometimes at his.

As a confessor, he was most frequently passive; he heard much and spoke little; if he prescribed, it was in a few words. As a director, he is active; not only does he prescribe the acts, but what is still deeper, by means of their intimate conversation, he influences the thoughts.

To the confessor they told their sins, nothing more. To the director they tell every thing. They speak of themselves, their cares, their business, their interests. Shall they not confide their small temporal affairs, such as the marriage of children, the will they are perfecting, &c., to him to whom they confide their greatest interest, that of their eternal safety?

The confessor is bound to secrecy; he is silent, or should be so. The director has not this obligation. He can reveal what he knows, especially to a priest or another director. Let us suppose in a house twenty priests, (or a few less from regard to the law of association,) who are some confessors, others directors of the same persons; as directors they can exchange their tokens, place in common upon a table a thousand or two consciences, by combining the reports like the pieces in a game of chess, by regulating in advance the movements and interests, and by distributing among themselves the parts which they should play to lead all to their ends.

The Jesuits alone formerly thus laboured together. All communicating with all, there resulted from these secret revelations a vast and mysterious science, by which the ecclesiastical policy obtained an army a thousand times stronger than that of a state could be.

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\* The name is now rare, the thing common. He who is for a long time confessor, becomes a director.

What was wanting in the confession of masters, was easily supplied by that of domestics, valets, and servant maids. The association of Blandines in Lyons, imitated in Brittany, Paris, and elsewhere, would alone suffice to throw light in the internal affairs of families. Though they know them, they none the less employ them. They are mild and docile—serve their masters very well—know how to look and listen.

Happy father of a family who has such a wife. So virtuous—such domestics—mild and humble, honest, pious. What the man in olden times wished, to live in a glass house, where every one could always see him, he could have without wishing for it. Not a word of his is lost. He speaks very low, but the fine ear has heard all. If he writes his inmost thoughts, not wishing to speak them, they are read, by whom?—he is ignorant. That which he dreams on his pillow, he is astonished to hear the next day in the street.



## CHAPTER IV.

*Habit—Its Power, its insensible Beginnings, its Progress, second Nature, frequently baneful.—A man labouring under the Power of Habit, can he free himself from it ?*

IF the spiritual sway is truly spiritual, if the empire over thought is obtained by thought itself, by superiority of character and of mind, then we must submit to it. Nothing is left but resignation. The family will, doubtless, demand the person, but in vain.

It is not then enough to generalize. The influence of which we speak, never supposes, as an essential condition, brilliant endowments of the mind. They serve, beyond doubt, him who has them—but if he has them in an eminent degree, they may injure him. Brilliant superiority, which always appears to pretend to rule, begets distrust, warns the least prudent, and closes the door to those beginnings which, in this case, are every thing.\* Men of moderate intellects do not alarm us, they have an easier entrance. The weaker they are, the less are they suspected and the stronger are they in one sense. . . . The iron quashes on the rock, it becomes dull and blunted against it. But water—what can set it at defiance? Soft, colourless, tasteless; if, however, it continues to fall in the same spot, it will, at length, wear away the rock and the flint.

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\* Romance writers rarely understand this. Most of them commence with an adventure, a surprising meeting. But every thing which is surprising places us on our guard, and prevents the beginning of any thing. They are prodigal of adventures, active, and nothing would justly be fitted to awaken attention, to render fascinations impossible, &c. What we say in this chapter of the power of habit, will, perhaps, be understood by people of the world, especially of Paris; in a life so distracted and varied, they can scarcely imagine the dull uniformity which time would, under other circumstances, bring.

Remain at that window every day, at the same hour in the afternoon. You will see a pale man passing along the street, looking upon the ground—always by the same street, always on the same line in the pavement. There he placed his foot yesterday, there he places it to-day, and there he will place it to-morrow; he would wear out the stones if they were not renewed. And through this same street he goes to the same house, he mounts by the same staircase, and in the same cabinet he speaks to the same person. He speaks of the same things, and always appears to speak of the same thing. The person who listens to him, sees no difference between yesterday and to-day. Sweet uniformity, as sweet as the sleep of an infant, whose breathing raises its breast uniformly with the same slight noise.

You think that nothing changes in this monotonous equality, and that one day is as another. You are in error. You have perceived nothing, and yet at each day there is a change, slight indeed, it is true, imperceptible, which the person, changed herself little by little, does not remark.

It is like a dream in a vessel. How far you have traversed, while dreaming, who can know? You go on thus without moving—motionless, and yet rapid. Escaping from the river, or canal, you soon find yourself on the sea—the immense uniformity in which you now are, will advise you still less of the distance you traverse. More room and more time; there is no marked point to attract attention, and there's no more attention to it. Profound is the revery, and still more profound . . . an ocean of dreams on the soft ocean of waters.

Sweet state, where, little by little, every thing becomes insensible—even mildness itself. Is it a state of death or life? To distinguish it, requires attention, and we must leave our revery. I do not know whither it carries me—whether it leads me to life or death.

Habit, habit, soft and formidable abyss, into which one

glides so softly ! One can equally speak all the good, and all the evil in the world of thee, and it will be always true.

Let us avow it: if the action which we performed at first in full knowledge, and voluntarily, was only done willingly and attentively, if it did not become habitual and easy, we would do but little and gently ; life would pass in endeavours and efforts. If, for example, at each step that we took, we should deliberate concerning the direction of it, and seek our equilibrium, we should not walk more than an infant, who endeavours to walk. But walking is now a habit, an action which is accomplished without the necessity of invoking the continual intervention of the will. Is it not so with many other actions, which still less voluntary, end by becoming mechanical, automaton-like in us, strangers in some sort to our personality. As we advance in life, a notable part of our activity escapes from our knowledge, sallies from the sphere of liberty to enter into that of habit, and becomes as fatal ; the remainder solaced on this side—and being dispensed on that from attention and effort, finds itself, in revenge, free to act elsewhere.

Habit is useful—but dangerous. The fatal part augments in us, without our being concerned about it, and increases in our dark hearts. That which yesterday excited our attention, to-day passes by unperceived. That which was at first difficult, becomes in time easy, perhaps too easy, since one cannot even longer say that it is easy, for it alone becomes every thing, without our having wished it ; we suffer if we do not do it. These actions being, of all others, those which cost the least punishment, are unceasingly renewed. We must, admit that a second nature at length results from them, which, formed at the expense of the other, in a great degree replaces it. We forget the difficulties of the first beginnings, and we figure to ourselves that we have always been thus. This favours at least our idleness, and prevents us from making any efforts to arrest ourselves on the declivity. Besides, the trace

of change is in fact at length effaced, the way has disappeared—should we wish to reconstruct it, we would not be able to do so. It is like a bridge broken behind us; we have passed over it, and we shall pass it no more.

We then resign ourselves, and we say, endeavouring to smile, “it is second nature for me;” or even, “*it is my nature*,” so much have we forgotten.

But between this nature, and our true original nature, which we had at our birth, there is a great difference.\* It is this: this latter, drawn from the bosom of our mother, was like that mother herself, an attentive guardian of our life, which warned us of all that could compromise us; which sought and formed in its benevolence a remedy against our ills. And this second nature, habit, under this perfidious name, is nothing but the highway which leads to death.

“It is my second nature,” says sadly the opium drinker, seeing him die by his side, who had advanced some months before him in the use of this deadly beverage. “I have yet so many months to live.” . . . “It is my second nature,” says that miserable child, the devoted victim of sensual pleasure. Nothing helps it, neither reasoning, nor punishment, nor maternal grief. Both are going, will go, to the end by the road which never recommences.

A vulgar proverb, (here cruelly true,) tells us, “He who has drank will drink.” Let us generalize it—he who has acted, will act; he who has suffered will suffer. Only it is more true in relation to passive than active habits. Accustomed to idleness, to suffering, to enjoyment, we become incapable of resuming active exertion. At length it needs no longer the allurements of enjoyment. After that it is drained, and grief takes its place; inexorable habit pours always into the same cup; it takes no longer the pains to dissimulate; we discover

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\* This difference is not pointed out, as I know, by Maine de Biran, nor by Mr. Felix Ravaisson, in his ingenious and profound dissertation on habit.



it too late to be invidious and invincible, and it says coldly to us, "Thou hast drunk the honey; now thou shalt drink the gall even to the last drop."

If this tyrant is so strong, when it acts blindly, when it is but a single thing like opium or gin, what is it then when it has two eyes, a will, art; in one word, when it is a man? . . . A man full of calculation, who knows how to create and foment the habit to his own profit; a man who, as his first means, has against himself your own belief; who combines personal fascination with the authority of a respected character; who, to exercise it over you, and found a habit of it in you, has daily opportunities, days, months, years—time, irresistible time, the tamer of all human things; time which regards it but as sport to eat iron and brass. . . . Is the heart of a woman then harder, that it can resist him?

A woman? a child! . . . A person at least, who desires *to be a child*, who employs all the faculties she has acquired since her infancy, in falling back into the state of infancy, who directs her will to will no longer, her thoughts to think no more, who surrenders herself to sleep.

Suppose that she wakes up, (it is a case which never happens,) that she wakes up for a moment, that she surprises her tyrant without his mask, and that she sees him as he is, and wishes to escape. . . . Do you believe that she can? \* For that purpose she must act, and she knows no longer how to do so, not having acted for so long a time; the members are cold; the paralyzed limbs know nothing of motion; the heavy hand rises up, falls down, and says, No.

Then do they not perceive too often, that it is but habit, and how bound once by its thousand imperceptible threads you remain joined in spite of yourself to that which you detest.

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\* This causes one to think of the enchanter Merlin, who, at the entreaty of Vivian, lay down in his tomb; but he did not know the words which were to deliver him; he remains there, and will remain until the judgment.

These threads, though invisible none the less, resist you; weak and supple as they appear, you break one, and beneath it you find two; it is a double, triple web. . . . Who knows its thickness?

I read once in an old tale a very striking and truly significant thing. It was the story of a woman, a wandering princess, who, after many fatigues, found an asylum in a deserted palace in the midst of a wood. She was happy to repose there, and to sojourn there for some time; she went and came without obstacle, through the great empty rooms; she thought herself alone and free. All the doors were open, only at the entrance, since she had passed it, no one having passed after her, a spider had stretched its web to the sun, a web fine, light, almost invisible. A feeble obstacle, which the princess, who wished at length to leave it, believed she could disperse without difficulty. In fact she raises this web, but there is a second one behind it, which she raises without difficulty. The second covers a third, which she must also raise. Strange, there is a fourth—a fifth, or rather six—and still more. Ah! how could she raise so many webs? She is already very tired. . . . No matter, she perseveres; by taking a little breath she can continue. . . . But the web also continues, and constantly renews itself with malicious obstinacy. What small shreds! She yields to fatigue, perspiration flows from her, her arms fall by her sides. . . . She finishes by seating herself exhausted on the ground, on this impassable threshold; she looks sadly at this aerial obstacle, which dances in the wind, light and a conqueror. Poor princess, poor fly, you are then a prisoner. Why did you stop in this fairy mansion, and leave to the spider time to make its web?

## CHAPTER V.

*Convents.—Absolute power of the Director.—State of the Nun forsaken, watched.—Convents, which are at once Houses of Force and Lunatic Houses.—Inveigling.—Barbarous Discipline.—Struggle between the Superior and Director.—Change of the Director.—The Magistrate.*

I OCCUPIED for fifteen years a house in a solitary quarter, whose garden joined that of a convent for females. Although my casements overlooked the greater part of the garden, I never saw my sad neighbours. In the month of May, on the day of Rogation, I heard numerous voices, but weak, very weak, which chanted prayers traversing the gardens of the convent. The singing was sad, poor, ungrateful, with voices badly harmonized, as if broken by suffering. I thought for a moment that I recognized the prayers for the dead; listening better, however, I distinguished "*Te rogamus, audi nos*," the song of hope, which calls down upon fruitful nature the blessing of the God of life. This song of May, sung by these dead ones, was a bitter contrast. I see these pale daughters, who shall never flourish, draw themselves along on the green grass, bearing flowers. . . . The thoughts of the middle age, which first seized me, soon escaped; then the monastic life was allied with a thousand other things; but in our modern harmony what is it but a barbarous misconstruction, a false note which jars! I would not defend that which was before my eyes, neither from nature nor from history. I closed my casement, and sadly took up again my book. That sight had been painful, not having been softened, nor relieved by any poetical sentiment. It recalled virginity less than barren widowhood; a state of emptiness, of want, of power, of ennui,

of an intellectual\* and moral fast, in which these unfortunate beings are kept by their absolute masters.

We spoke of habit—it is here that it reigns as a tyrant. There is no need of art to take these poor, isolated, shut up, dependent women, who have nothing from without to balance the impression which a person, the same person can give them every day. The least skilful might fascinate without difficulty a nature broken and bent to the most servile, the most trembling obedience. It requires but little courage and merit to rule that which is already broken to our hands.

To speak only at first of the power of habit, there is nothing which we see in the world of the living that can convey an idea of the force which it has in this small enclosed world. The society of our family modifies us beyond doubt; but its influence is neutralized by external movements. The regularity of the favorite journal, which comes every morning to sound the same sound, is not without its influence; but this journal has others opposed to it. An influence which is less in these times, but which is still very strong over isolated persons, is that of a great book, whose attractive reading detains us for twenty years. Diderot avows that *Clarissa*, read and re-read, was, for a long time, all his life, its joy, its sadness, its storm, its sunbeam. The most beautiful of books, however, is

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\* I have already spoken above of sister Maria Lemonnier, persecuted for knowing how to write too well, to draw flowers, &c. “My confessor,” said she, “prohibited me from culling flowers and drawing them. In walking in the garden with the nuns, unfortunately, on the border of the turf, were two wild poppies, which, without thinking, I broke off in passing. One of the sisters saw me, and ran to inform the superior, who was walking before; she returned at once towards me, made me open my hand, and seeing the poppies, said they could not depend upon me; and the confessor having come that night, she accused me to him of disobedience in having culled the flowers. I said to him that it was without thinking, and that they were wild poppies, but I could not obtain permission to confess.” *Note of sister Maria Lemonnier*, in the *Memoir of M. Filliard*. The journals and reviews of March, 1845, furnish us with the extracts.



but still a book, a mute thing, which does not understand us and does not reply to us; it has no words to reply to words, eyes to reflect eyes.

Behind me, then, be these cold images of paper—books! Imagine in a solitude into which nothing else penetrates, one living thing, the person who alone has the right to enter there, who takes the place of all the influences of which we have spoken, who is, to her, society, poetical romance, and sermon, a person whose coming alone breaks the mortal duration of an unoccupied life. *Before* he comes, *after* that he has come, is, in this profound dullness, the only division of time.

We said a person—we must say it, a man. To be the only one, without comparison, without contradiction, to be the world of a soul; to sever it at will from every recollection which can induce rivalry, to efface from that docile heart even the thoughts of a mother which still remained there.\* . . . Heir of all, to remain alone and fortified in this heart by all the national sentiment which he has destroyed.

The *only one*! But he is the good, the perfect, the amiable,

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\* It is frequently a pure instinct of tyranny which leads the superiors to break the ties of relationship. "The curate of my parish exhorted me to write to my father who had lost my mother. I allowed Advent to pass, during which the nuns are not permitted to write letters, and the last days of the month which are passed in retreat in the institute to prepare for the renewal of the vows which is made on New Year's Day. But after the ceremonies I hastened to fulfill my duty towards the best of fathers, by addressing to him my vows and wishes, and endeavoring to give him some consolation in the afflictions and proofs through which it had pleased God to make him pass. I went to the cell of the superior, to ask her to read my letter, affix the seal of the convent to it, and send it—but she was not there. I placed it then in my cell, on the table, and went to service, during which the mother superior, who knew that I had written, because she sent one of her nuns to see what I was doing, made a sign to one of the sisters and sent her to take my letter. She did that to me seven times in succession, so that my father died five months afterwards without having been able to obtain the letter he desired from me, and which he had caused the curate of the parish to ask from me when on his death bed." Note of Sister Lemonnier, in the memorial of M. Filliard. See also the National, for March, 1845.

the beloved. . . . Enumerate all the good qualities, and they will be comprised in these words: One thing even, (without speaking of persons,) one thing, if it is single, will end by taking captive the heart. Charlemagne looking constantly at the same view from his palace, a lake and its green border, ended by becoming enamoured of it.

Custom does much, but the heart requires to speak to that which it constantly sees. Man or thing, it must speak to it. Were it a stone, it would tell every thing to it. It is well that our thoughts run over, and that our griefs escape from an overcharged heart.

In this life so uniform, do you believe that that poor nun is tranquil? Ah! What sad avowals could I here portray—avowals too certain, transmitted by tender friends who received the tears into their bosoms and came themselves, with pierced hearts, to weep near me.

What causes us to mourn over the prisoner is, that she dies in heart, and almost in body. If she is not broken down, destroyed so as to forget what she was, she will find in the convent the sufferings of solitude and the world united together. Alone, without the power of being alone,\*—forsaken, watched.

Forsaken.—That nun, still young, but already old from abstinence and grief, was yesterday a boarder, a novice who was caressed. The friendships of the young girls, the maternal flatteries of the great, the attractions of this nun or that confessor, all have deceived her and led her gently towards eternal seclusion. Almost always they believe themselves called towards God, when they follow this or that person, of a smiling and seducing devotion; who amuses herself with this kind of spiritual conquest. One gained she goes to another;

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\* The preliminary confession of a nun to a superior, easily accepted during the first fervor, soon becomes an intolerable vexation. In the life of Madame Chantal, where it is complained of, see her letters, Vol. ii. pp. 228, 272, 346, and Fichet 256, Cf. Ribadeneira. The life of St. Theresa.

believing herself beloved by the poor one who followed her she cares no more for her.

Alone in a solitude, without contemplation, without repose! How sweet would be in the comparison, the solitude of forests. The trees there would pity her. They are not so hard as they appear to be; they hear and they listen.

The heart of woman, of a mother, the invincible, maternal instinct which proceeds from the very bottom of a woman's heart, seeks to deceive itself. It has found some young friend, some artless companion, a favorite pupil. . . . Alas! that will be taken from her. Those desirous to make their court, do not fail to arraign the purest attachments. The devil is jealous of the interests of God—it is for God alone he makes reclamations.

What wonder is it if this woman is sad, if she becomes more and more so, if she wanders alone in the darkest walks and no longer speaks? It is solitude then which becomes her crime. She is pointed out, suspected—all observe and watch her. By day? That is not enough. The surveillance lasts during the night; they watch her when asleep, they listen when she dreams, and note down her words.

The frightful sentiment of being thus watched day and night strangely troubles all the powers of the soul. The darkest hallucinations come on; all the worst possible reveries occur in open day, and when she is awake. How can poor reason endure it? You know the visions which Piranesi has engraved. Vast subterranean prisons, profound depths without air, staircases which we climb for ever without reaching the termination; bridges which lead to the abyss; low vaults; narrow corridors of catacombs which are about to close up. . . . In those frightful prisons, which are themselves punishments, you still find instruments of torture, wheels, iron collars, thongs.

What is, I pray you, the boundary which separates the convents of our day from prisons and from lunatic asylums? Several convents appear to unite the three characters.

I know of one difference in the establishments—it is this: justice overlooks the prisons, the police the lunatic asylums.\* But at the gates of convents both stop; the law trembles, and dares not cross the threshold.

The supervision of convents and a precise knowledge of their characters, are still more indispensable now, as they differ greatly from the convents under the old monarchy.

Those of the last century were, properly speaking, hospitals in which, for a dowry once paid, every noble family, or that of a rich citizen, placed one or more daughters in order to make a son rich. Once enclosed there, it was their business whether they lived or died, no one gave themselves any uneasiness about them. Now, *nuns inherit*, they are an object, a prey. For them are spread a thousand snares to inveigle them, an easy prey in their situation of captivity and dependance. A superior desirous of enriching her community, has infallible means at her command to constrain the nun to give up her property. She can, a hundred times a day, under pretext of devotion and penitence, humiliate, vex, even maltreat her, so as to cast her into despair. Who will say where ascetism terminates and inveigling begins? The financial and administrative genius now so sway the convents, that it is this kind of capacity which is required in a superior. Several of these ladies are eminent business men. One is known at Paris to notaries and people of the law, as being able to give them lessons in matters of donations, successions, and wills. Paris no longer envies Boulogne the possession of this learned jurisconsult,

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\* Sister Marie Lemonnier was confined with lunatics. She found there a Carmelite who had been there for *nine years*. The third volume of the *Wandering Jew* contains the true history of Miss B. She really went not into an hospital, but into a convent. Since I have this opportunity of saying a word to our admirable romance writer, will he permit me to ask him why he idealizes the Jesuits in this point; does he not know that certain dignitaries of the order are immortalized by ridicule? It is difficult to believe that unskilful writers have strong heads and are profound schemers. I look for Bodins, and I find but Loriguets.



who lately, covered with a veil, taught in the chair of her father.

Our modern laws, the laws of the revolution, which in their equity have wished that the daughter and younger son should inherit, labour here powerfully for the counter revolution. It assists us in comprehending the rapid unheard of multiplication of religious houses; Lyons, which had but forty convents in 1789, has now sixty-three.\* Nothing stops the zeal of monastic recruiters for the safety of rich souls—you see them fidgeting around heirs and heiresses. What a premium to the young peasants who people our seminaries, is this perspective of being able, when once priests, to rule fortunes as well as consciences.†

Inveigling, which is a little watched in the world, is not in the convent, where it is more dangerous, exercising itself on confined and dependant persons. There it can be with impunity, unchecked, terrible. Who can know it? Who dares to enter there?‡ No one. . . . Strange thing, there are in our country, houses which are not in France. That street, it is still France; cross that threshold, it is a strange country, which mocks at your laws.

What are then theirs? We know not. What we know with certainty, and which is not dissimulated, is, that the bar-

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\* I quote from memory the statistics given in 1843 by M. Lortet.

† Every body buys, sells, traffics. Prelates speculate in lands and buildings, Lazarists in agencies for military recruiting, &c. These last, the successors of St. Vincent de Paul, the directors of the Sisters of Charity, have been, for their charity, so blessed by God, that they now have a capital of twenty millions of francs. Their actual general, M. Stephen, then proctor of the order, was recently the agent of the Lazarists in a distillery company. The grave suit in which they are at present engaged presses for a decision, that if a society enters into an engagement, through its general, its absolute chief, it becomes absolved from that engagement by changing its general.

‡ At Sens, a magistrate dared to enter one, and an ultra Catholic journal regrets that he was not thrown out of the window.

barous discipline of the middle ages\* still rules and perpetuates itself there. Cruel contradiction, that system which talks so much of the distinction between soul and body, and which so believes, when it boldly approaches the confessor with carnal temptations; well, the same system believes, that the body, distinct from the soul, is modified by suffering, and that the soul is ameliorated and made pure by the blows of the lash.† Spiritualized, to strengthen it to resist the seductions of the flesh; materialized, when the question is to break the will.

How? When in those galleys even among robbers, murderers, the most ferocious men, the law prohibits blows. . . . You, men of grace, whose only talk is of charity, the holy Virgin, the mild Jesus; you whip women! . . . What did I say? girls, children; whose only fault is, after all, some weakness.

How are these chastisements administered? That is, perhaps, a still more grave question. What kind of compounding does fear induce them to make? At what price does authority sell indulgence?

Who regulates the number of the blows? Is it from Madame Abbess? or is it the father superior? What must the passionate, capricious, arbitrary sway of a woman over a woman be, if this latter displeases her; of a hag over a beauty; of an old woman over a young one? One dares not think.

There a strange controversy frequently occurs between the superior and the director. The latter, hardened though he be, is still a man. It is very difficult, if at length that poor girl, who tells him every thing and obeys him in all things, does not move him. The feminine authority at once perceives every thing; observes him, and follows him closely. He sees his penitent little, very little, and it is always too much. The confession will last so many minutes; they wait; show themselves at hand.—She would remain long without this precau-

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\* See the preface of this third edition, at the end of the volume.

† I find the confirmation of this in the notes of the nun already cited.

tion; for to the recluse, who experiences elsewhere but insult and bad treatment, a compassionate confessor is still a liberty.

We have seen superiors several times ask for, and obtain from the bishops, a change of their confessors, not having found them harsh enough for their fancy. There is a great difference between the hardness of a man, and the cruelty of a woman. What is in your opinion, the most faithful incarnation of the devil in this world? This inquisitor, or that Jesuit? No; it is a female Jesuit; a great lady converted, who believes herself born to rule; who, among this flock of trembling females, assumes the part of a Bonaparte, and who, more absolute than the most absolute tyrants, uses the fury of illy conquered passions in tormenting the unfortunate, defenceless ones.

Far from being opposed here to the confessor, my wishes are for him. Priest, monk, Jesuit, behold me on his side. I pray him to interfere, if he can. He is still in this hell, into which the law does not penetrate; the only person who can say a word in the cause of humanity. . . . I know very well, that this interference will create the strongest, the most dangerous attachment. The heart of the poor creature is given in advance to him who defends her.

They will remove this priest; they will drive him away; they will get rid of him if they can. He hazards nothing there; he fears a disturbance, and retires timidly. You will find neither priests nor prelates who maintain themselves with their power as confessors and spiritual judges, and who refuse absolution to the tyrants of the nuns as Las Casas did to those of the Indians.

There are, fortunately, other judges. The law sleeps,\* but

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\* The affairs of Avignon, Sens, Poictier, although the guilty have been punished so slightly, afford hopes that the law will wake up.—We read in one of the journals of Caen:—It is rumoured at the palace that M., the attorney general, is about to call up, not only the affair of the sequestration of Sister Maria. but also that of Sister Ste. Placide, as a step in which M. the

it lives. Courageous magistrates have been willing to do their duty.\* There is no doubt they are not permitted to do so. The nights of these tyrants are troubled; they know, that every violence which is there committed, every blow which is there struck, is in contempt of the laws; is an accusation against them before heaven and earth. . . . Rise Lord and judge thy cause!

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advocate general Sorbier wrote to the sub-prefect of Bayeux on the 13th of August last: finally, that of Miss H—— of Rouen, whom the king's attorney at Rouen was obliged to bring away from the establishment of St. Sauveur."—*National*, 16th March, 1845.

\* The supervision of the convents should be divided between the judicial magistrates, the municipal magistrates, and the administration of charity; the courts are too much occupied to have charge of it alone. If these houses are necessary as asylums for poor females who earn too little even in an isolated life, let them be free asylums, like the Beguinages of Flanders, with a well-known rule like that of the Beguinages.



## CHAPTER VI.

*The Absorption of the Will.—Rule of Actions, Thoughts, the Will.—Assimilation.—Transhumanation.—To become the God is another Pride.—Want of Power.—Pride and Concupiscence.*

If we are to believe politicians, happiness consists in ruling. They sincerely think so, since they accept in exchange so much fatigue and misery, such martyrdom frequently, that even the saints perhaps would never have accepted it.

Only we must rule truly. Is it ruling, to make ordinances which are not executed; to send, with great effort, and as a supreme victory, one law more to sleep in the bulletin of laws, near its thirty thousand sisters?

It is nothing to ordain acts, if, first of all, one is not master of the thoughts; in order to govern the world of body, we must will that of mind. Behold what says the thinker, the powerful writer, and he thinks to rule. He is in fact a king, at least to posterity. If he is truly original, he is in advance of his times, he is put aside. He will reign to-morrow, after to-morrow, throughout ages, and always more absolute. To-day he will be alone; each success costs him a friend. He acquires new friends—I am willing to believe them to be ardent, innumerable; those whom he loses are doubtless of less value, but they were those whom he loved; he will never see the others. Labour, disinterested man, labour on; thou shalt have for a reward, a little noise and smoke. Are not the virtuous well paid? King of the time which has not come, thou wilt live and die with empty hands. On the border of that unknown sea of ages, thou hast gathered a shell which thou carriest to thy ear, to listen there to a slight noise in which thou thinkest thou hearest thy name.

See this one on the other hand . . . this priest, always say-

ing that his kingdom is on high, has adroitly obtained the realities here below. He allowed thee to go on at thy ease, seeking for unknown worlds. He has seized on this, thy world to thee, poor dreamer! that which thou loved, the nest to which thou thoughtest to return and arm thyself. . . . Accuse no one but thyself, it is thy own fault. Thine eyes turned towards the aurora, thou hast forgotten to spy out the first rays of the future. Thou thyself returnest a little too late, and another has now the dear little place, in which thou hast left thy heart.

The thoughts do not always govern the inclinations. One cannot secure these, except by the will itself; not a general and vague will, but a special, personal one, which attaches itself with perseverance to a person, and truly rules him, because it conforms him to its image.

This it is to rule over a soul. As a price of one such royalty, what are all thrones? What is dominion over the unknown crowd? . . . The truly ambitious have not hesitated to despise it. They have not dispersed their efforts in the extension of a vague and feeble power which loses itself in the extension. They have looked rather to the solidity of power, its intensity, its unchangeable possession.

The end thus pointed out, the priest has a great advantage in which none can equal him. He has a matter for a subject which surrenders itself to him. The great obstacle to other powers is, that they do not understand those on whom they are operating; they see the exterior;\* the priest sees the inmost heart. Whether skilful or of moderate acquirements, by the sole virtue of terrors and hopes; by the magic key which opens the world to come, he also opens the heart. That heart desires to open itself to him; all its fear is, that it may con-

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\* The confessional even incomplete, as it appears before the judge, infinitely enlightens the moralist. The painter of morals, Walter Scott, was a clerk of the court; Fielding a commissary of police, or judge of the peace, &c.

ceal something. The heart does not entirely know itself, but even where it is ignorant, the priest still sees, and he penetrates farther, by comparing the revelations with those of servants, friends, and relatives. From all these lights he can, if he is skilful, form a luminous fire, which, concentrated on an object, illumines every part of it so well, that he knows not only the actual existence, but the future, reading from day to day, in instinct and sentiment, that which to-morrow will be thought. He then knows truly that heart, he sees it and foresees it.

An unique science; which would still remain inexplicable without a last word. If it *knows* its subject at this point, it is the same as if it had *made* it. The director makes the directed; the latter is his work, and he becomes at length the same man. How? Should not the former know the ideas, the wishes which he himself has given birth to; which are his own? A transfusion takes place, under this incessant action, between these two persons; in which the inferior receiving every thing from the other,\* is constantly getting rid of herself. Daily feebler and idler, she places her happiness in no longer even wishing; with seeing herself throwing away and losing that importunate will by which she has suffered too much. Thus the wounded man regards his blood, his life flowing out, and feels lighter.

What recompenses for this gushing out of moral personality by which you escape from yourself? What fills the void? In two letters—he!

*He*, the patient and wary man, who day by day, depriving you by little of yourself, substituting therefor a little of himself, has gently subtilized the one, and placed the other in

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\* She receives especially all the ill of the other, his negative side. Exclusive, malevolent, dry and hard.—Something of this is seen in the hard and ungrateful picture attributed to Zurbaran.—A man of brass laying his hand upon two women of lead. (Le St. Dominic at the Louvre, Collection Standish.)

its stead. The soft and feeble natures of women, almost as fluid as those of children, easily lend themselves to the transfusion. She the same, who always sees him the same, takes, without knowing it, his mode of thought, his accent, his language. What did I say? Something of his gait and his physiognomy. As he speaks, she speaks—as he walks, she walks. On only seeing her pass, he who knows how to observe, will see that *she is he*.

But these external conformities are but feeble signs of the profound change which is taking place within. That which is transformed, is the within, and the farthest within. A grand mystery is accomplished, which Dante calls *transhumanation*. When a human being, laying the foundation without her own knowledge has taken, substance for substance, another humanity; when the superior replaces the inferior, the passive has no more occasion even for direction, but becomes his agent. *He*, still is, the other is not, save as an accident, a quality of his being, a pure phenomenon, a vain shadow, a nothing.

We spoke but now of influence, of sway, of royalty. This is a different thing from royalty; it is divinity.—It is to be the God of another.

If there is in the world an occasion to become crazy, it is that. The thought of a man who has arrived at this, no matter in what humility he may envelop himself, is that of a pagan—“*Deus factus sum*.” I was a man, and I am a god.

More than a god—he may say to his creature, “God created thee so; I have made thee other, so that, being no longer his, but mine, thou art I, my inferior self; who no longer distinguishes me but to adore me.”

“Dependant creature, why shouldst thou not have yielded? God even yields to my word, when I cause him to descend to the altar\*—Christ humbles himself, and docile comes at my

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\* It is in the Thoughts of Origen, that the priest should be a little God, to perform a function which is above that of angels.” Le P. Fichet (a Jesuit)



bidding, my sign, to take the place of the bread which no longer is."

We are not astonished at the furious pride of the priest, who, in his royalty at Rome, has frequently surpassed all the follies of emperors, despising not only men and things, but his own oath, and the word even which he pronounced infallible. The priest, able to make a God, could also make the odd even, that which was done as not having been done, that which was said as not having been said. . . . The angels fear such a power, and step aside with respect from before this man to look at him in passing.\*

Go, now vaunt your privations, your macerations to me—I am much moved. . . . Do you think that beneath that contracted robe, that meagre body, and in that pale heart, I do not see the profound, exquisite, and delirious joy of pride which makes the very being of a priest? That which he carries beneath his robe, and hatches so jealously, is the treasure of terrible pride. . . . His hands tremble, a yellow fire lightens up his downcast eyes.

Life of Madame de Chantal, page 615.—If you wish a Jesuit greater than Fichet, behold Bourdaloue. "Although the priest is in his sacrifice only the substitute of Jesus Christ, it is certain, however, that Jesus Christ *submits himself to him*, that he is *subject to him*, and renders to him daily upon our altars, the *most prompt and exact obedience*. If the law did not teach us these truths, could we believe that a man could ever attain to such an elevation, and be clothed with the character that enables him, in fact, if I dare so speak, to *command* his sovereign lord, and cause him to descend from Heaven."

\* One of the new priests whom St. Francis de Sales ordained, frequently saw his good angel. On arriving at the door of the church he stopped. Some one asked him why he did so. He ingenuously replied, "that he was accustomed to see his good angel walk before him, and that there this prince of heaven *had stopped out of respect to his character, yielding to him this pre-eminence*." Maupas de Tour, Life of St. Francis of Sales, p. 199. Molinos said boldly, (Guida, lib. 2, chap. 1,) "If God had given angels to conduct men, they might be blinded by demons who had transformed themselves into angels of light. Happily," &c.

Oh, how he hates all that resists him, all that hinders his infinite from being infinite. How, from the bottom of his heart, does he desire the annihilation of it. . . . Oh, how diabolical is the hatred of the man who believes himself God!

Great suffering is attached to this great joy of being the god of another soul; all that thy divinity wants causes it to suffer horribly. You need not be astonished that he pursues with insatiable ardour the absorption of a soul which he hopes to liken to his own. You can easily comprehend the real and profound cause of that strange avidity, which wishes to see all, and to know all, great and small things, the principal and the accessory, the essential and the indifferent; which, dissatisfied with envelopment, or exterior, addresses itself even to the bottom, and seeking a depth beyond, wishes to reach the substance. . . . Whatever it attains, it will say farther! farther!—still—more and more. Alas it acquires more, and there is still something beyond. Who can measure a soul! It peeps in corners which it does not know, (nor you no more,) spaces and depths. . . . This soul, which it appeared to you you had acquired, and which you thought you had entire, it conceals, perchance, a world of liberty which you cannot reach.

That is humiliating, grievous, and almost causes despair. . . Oh what suffering—for a god not to have every thing, is to have nothing.

There, then, in the midst of pride itself, an ironical voice is heard, mocking at pride; it is the voice of Concupiscence, which until now was silent. "Poor god," it says, "if thou art not a god, it is thy own fault; I have told thee, leave to me thy scholastic divinity, thy *distingue* of two natures, corporeal and spiritual. To possess is to have every thing—that has ownership, which it uses and abuses. In order that the soul may be truly thine, one thing is wanting—the body."

## CHAPTER VII.

*Concupiscence.—Consequences of Absorption and Assimilation.—Terrors of the other World.—The Physician and the sick Woman.—Alternatives.—Citations.—Effects of Fear in Love.—To be able to do all, and to abstain.—Dispute between the Spirit and the Flesh.—Death carries off the Living.—She will not revive.*

LET us remain for a moment on the borders of the abyss into which we are about to enter, and before descending, let us recall well where we are.

The boundless rule of which we have spoken, would never sufficiently explain itself by the power of habit, aided by all the arts of seduction and inveigling ; it would be, above all, impossible to comprehend how so many men of ordinary attainments succeed in obtaining it. We must recall here what we have said elsewhere. *If that power of death has so much captivation over the soul, it is because it most frequently attacks it dying*, broken down with worldly passions. Yielding to the flux and reflux of religious passions, the soul ends by finding neither strength nor nerve, any thing which enables it to resist.

Who among us is there, who has not felt those moments in which violent action having battered our hearts, we hate action, liberty, ourselves? . . . When the wave which rocked us, softly, traitorously, retires quickly and sharply, and leaves us dry upon the beach. . . . We remain there like a stone. . . . Never would the soul thus shocked, again move, if it were not without wishing it, raised up in the wave of Lethe. A low voice then says, "Do not stir, do not move, do not wish ; let the will die."—"Oh ! mercy, wish for me ; this embarrassing liberty, whose weight bears me down so, behold it. I hand it over to you.—A soft pillow of faith, of infantine docility, is all that I now need.—Oh ! that I could sleep well !"

And if it does not sleep, it is in a revery. Nervous, and trembling from weakness, how can it repose? The soul is unwilling to act, but the imagination acts even without it, and this involuntary fluctuation is only the more fatiguing. Then all the terrors of infancy return to the sick man, and with a vividness which they have not for a child. The phantasmagoria of the middle ages which we had thought forgotten, then revives; the whole black world of hell, exiled by our derision here indemnifies itself, and cruelly revenges itself; this poor soul belongs to it. What would become of it, alas! if it had not for a bolster the spiritual physician, who nurses it and reassures it—"Do not quit me, I am afraid."—"Do not trouble yourself, you are not responsible for all that; God pardons these disordered movements in you; they are not yours; it is the devil who acts thus in you."—"The devil! Ah! I perceived it; it seemed to me as if these singular and quick motions were strange to me. But what a horrible thing it is to be the sport of an evil spirit."—"I am here, do not fear; hold fast by me, and you will go straight; the abyss, it is true, is gaping on the right hand and the left; but in following this narrow bridge, God aiding us, on this edge of a razor, we will reach Paradise."

What a power does he possess who is thus necessary—continually called upon to hold the two threads of hope and terror which draw along the soul at will! Troubled, he calms it, and calm, he agitates it; it becomes weak gradually and the physician is stronger; he perceives it, he rejoices in it. It has for him to whom all natural joy is interdicted, a sombre happiness, a sickly sensuality to exercise this power, to cause a flux and reflux, to desolate in order to console, to wound in order to heal and to wound again. "Oh that she might be always sick. I suffer that she may suffer with me. It is something, at least, to have grief in common."

But it is not with impunity that one receives these sighs, sustains this languishing head—he who wounded is wounded.



The simplest in her outpourings, unwittingly says, frequently, things which scald him to the heart. He recoils from before this burning fire, which a hand so soft applies without knowing it; he becomes indignant, irritated at himself; he endeavours to make out of his trouble pious wrath; he seeks to hate the sin, and he only envies it.

How sombre he is to-day—see him mount the pulpit.—What is the matter with this man of God? The zeal of the law devours him; he bears all the sins of the people. What lightnings he causes—what thunders—is it the last judgment? All bend their heads. One alone has received the blow; she grows pale, her knees tremble; the picture was but too accurate; he who knows her even to the depth of her soul, has found, too easily, the terrible word, the only word which was right in this place. She alone has felt it; she finds herself alone in the church, (the crowd has disappeared for her,) and alone she perceives herself rushing into the darkness, the black abyss—“My father, stretch me your hand, I feel that I am giving way.”

Not yet, not yet—she must struggle, she must descend, remount a little, in order to descend the lower. She daily comes to him more woeful, more pressing. How she entreats him, how she insists. But she will not yet obtain the word which can reassure her. “To-day?” No—Saturday. . . . And on Saturday he puts her off until Wednesday.\* What, three days, three entire nights, in the same anxiety? She weeps then like a child. No matter—he resists, he leaves her, but he is troubled whilst resisting. It is a sacred pleasure of pride to have humbled this woman so beautiful, so disdainful, and yet he finds himself that he has been very hard upon her; he loves her, he has made her weep.

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\* This tactics of adjournment is particularly admirable in drawing from a woman a strange secret at the confessional, which she is unwilling to tell, the secret of her husband, the proper name of her lover, &c. She always ends by telling what they want to know.

Barbarian, do you not perceive how the poor woman yields? That she lowers herself at each approach? What do you want? Her fall? But in this prostration of strength, in this distracted terror, in this abandonment of herself, is there not already every fall? No, that which he wishes is that she should suffer like him, that she should resemble him in her grief, that she should be associated with him in her griefs and storms. He is alone; then she must be alone. He has no family; she shall not have a family. He hates the wife and mother; he wishes her as a lover—a lover of God; he deceives himself in deceiving her.

And in the midst of all this, all fascinated as she is, she is not, however, so blinded as you might think. Women, children are penetrating when they fear—they soon see what can reassure them. She, when suppliant, fearful, and faltering, she dragged herself at his feet, she saw, through her tears, the trouble she excited. They are troubled together, they are accomplices. Both know, (without understanding from indistinct confusion, from passion,) that they have both been caught, he by desire, she by fear.\*

Fear does much in love. The husband of the middle ages was beloved by his wife for his very severity. His humble Griselda recognized in him the right of the paternal rod. The betrothed of William the Conqueror, having been whipped by him, recognized him by this sign for her spouse and lord. Who has the right now? The husband has not preserved it—the priest has; he still uses it; he always has the baton of authority over woman; he whips her, submissive and docile with spiritual rods. Who can punish, can pardon; alone able to be severe, he alone has also, with a timid person, the supreme grace, clemency; a word of pardon is of more avail to him in this poor affrighted heart, than years of perseverance could be with the most worthy. Mildness operates just in proportion to the severities, to the terrors, which have preceded it. No fascination is comparable with it. How can one struggle against

a man who, disposing of paradise, has still beyond that, hell, to cause himself to be loved?

That unforeseen return of kindness is a very dangerous moment for her who, tamed by fear, her forehead in the dust, waits only for the thunderbolt—when this redoubtable judge, this angel of the judgment suddenly is softened. She perceived the coldness of the sword, she now perceives the warmth of the soft hand of a friend who raises her from the earth. It is too much for her; she resisted fear, she falls before this mildness.

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To have all power, and still abstain—slippery situation! Who can be steady on a declivity?

Here is found in the way of concupiscence, the point to which the way of Pride always leads.

Concupiscence, at first despised by pride as brutal and gross, becomes a sophist; it places before pride the terrible problem, before which desire, mingled with fright, blinks and turns away its looks. It looks without looking; it places its hand over its eyes, but opening the fingers like the *vigoginsa* of Campo-Santo.

“Is it certain that one would have the whole heart, if one had the body? Will physical possession surrender to us those sides of the soul which heretofore were inaccessible? Is not the spiritual domain complete, unless it embraces the other?—Great popes appear to have resolved the question; they believed that the papacy implied empire, and that the pope, in addition to his rule over the minds, was a king over the temporalities.”

Against this sophism of the flesh, the spirit still struggles; it is not wanting in a reply, “That the spiritual conquest, as soon as it is thus completed, ceases to be spiritual; that the conqueror who wishes for every thing, the mind, cannot have all without perishing in his victory.”

The flesh is not embarrassed; it takes refuge in hypocrisy;

it annuls itself, and becomes humble, in order to regain the advantage. "Is the body so great a thing, that we must disquiet ourselves about it? A simple dependent of the soul, it ought to follow where it leads." . . . The mystics do not spare insults upon the poor body, the flesh. The flesh is a she-ass, said one, which we may beat . . . What matters, said another, this dirty rivulet to the soul, which rides on horseback high and pure, without even regarding it. But the worst refinement of the Quietists follows, "If the inferior part does not sin, the superior part is proud, which is the greatest sin; then the flesh must sin, in order that the soul may remain humble; sin bestowing humility, is a step upwards to heaven. "Sinned? But has he sinned? (depraved devotion here refines the old sophism.) *He who is holy by essence, being holiness itself, always sanctifies.* In the spiritual man, every thing is spiritual; even that which in another is material. If in his upward flight, the holy man has still any obstacle which leads him back to earth, whatever inferior person frees him from it, performs a meritorious work, and is sanctified."

Diabolical subtlety, which few avow openly, but which very many fondle and caress in their secret thoughts. Molinos is forgotten, but not Molinosism.\*

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\* This name of Molinosism gives the idea of an old forgotten system. In practice, it is a thing of all times, an instinct, a blind belief, which is natural to the weak, and which we may thus describe:—*With the strong, every thing is well; with a saint, there is no sin.* See the sick man if he is happy enough to have his physician dine with him; behold him reassured, hardy; he eats every thing without fear. I believe that real Molinosism is always a powerful means with simple people. A contemporary, Llorente, relates, (vol. iii. chap. 28, article 2d, ed. 1817,) that when he was secretary to the Inquisition, there was brought before that tribunal a Capuchin, who directed a community of Beguines, almost all of whom he had seduced by persuading them that they were not quitting the way of perfection. He said to each of them at the confessional, that he had received a singular grace from God. "Our Lord," said he, "deigned to allow me to see him in the host, and said to me, 'Almost all the souls that thou directest here are agreeable to me, but especially such a one, (the Capuchin named



Besides, false reasoning is scarcely necessary in the miserable state of revery in which a soul lives, when deprived of

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her to whom he spoke.) She is already so perfect, that she has conquered all passions except the sensuality which so strongly torments her. On this account, therefore, being desirous that her virtue should be recompensed, and that she should live tranquilly, I charge thee to give her a dispensation, but to use it with thee; she shall not speak of it to any confessor; that would be useless, since with such a dispensation, she cannot sin.' " Of seventeen Beguines of whom the community was composed, he bestowed the dispensation on thirteen, who were discreet for a long time; one of them, however, was taken sick, believed herself to be dying, and revealed all, declaring that she had never believed in the dispensation, though she had availed herself of it. If the guilty man had merely pleaded guilty, he would have been let off with a very light punishment, the Inquisition being, says Llorente, very indulgent towards derelictions of that kind. But, in avowing the thing, he maintained that it had been well done, he having the power from Jesus Christ. "What," they said to him, "is it likely that our Lord would appear to you to grant you a dispensation of a precept of the decalogue?"—"He dispensed with the fifth precept to Abraham, in commanding him to slay his son; and with the seventh to the Hebrews, by granting them permission to rob the Egyptians."—"Yes, but these were mysterious acts favourable to religion."—"And what more favourable to religion than to tranquillise thirteen virtuous souls, and to lead them to perfect union with the divine essence."—I recollect, says Llorente, to have said to him, "But, my father, is it not astonishing that this virtue should have met in the thirteen young and handsome ones, and not in the four others, who were ugly or old?" He coldly replied, "The Holy Spirit blows where it will."

The same author in the same chapter, whilst reproaching the protestants for having exaggerated the corruption of confessors, admits "That in the sixteenth century the Inquisition had imposed on women the obligation of denouncing culpable confessors, but that these denunciations were so numerous, that they granted a dispensation to the penitents not to denounce them." Trials of this kind were held with closed doors, and the condemnations were stifled in the small *secret auto da fé*.—Llorente, after deducing the number of trials from the registers, compares the morality of the different religious orders, and finds by the figures a very natural result, which we might divine without figures. They abused their penitents just in proportion to the amount of money or liberty they had to seduce other women. The poor and recluse monks were dangerous confessors; the monks who had more freedom than the secular priests employed the hazardous means of the confessional less, because they found elsewhere easy opportunities.

its will and its reason. Out of herself and good sense, having lost all connection with reality, always plunged in a miracle, intoxicated with mysticism, glutted with the devil, it is weak even to death; but the excess of this weakness is enough to bring on a fever. Terrible contagion!—You believed that this death would always follow you, and it is you who follow it; it will carry off the living!

There expire all the subtleties which desire contributed.—A livid day penetrates. Sophism finds no more clouds to obscure it. You see too late, that you have done more than you wished to do; each of those suppressed powers, that will, that mind, that heart, which now are no more, would, if they had remained alive, have availed you. . . . Broken, withered, extinguished—the destroyed being feels no more; lays hold on nothing, and gives nothing hold on it! You wished to clasp love—you have stifled it. That which had life, is now annihilated. You would wish it to live; to resuscitate it.—Miracles have ceased. It is, and always will be, a cold shade, without any life to reply to you; press it if you can, you would perceive no sensation.—That will be your despair. You can feign every thing; say every thing, except one word, which I defy you to pronounce without grief, the sacred name of love.

Love—but you have killed it!—There must be a person to love; and you have made a thing of that which was a person.

Proud man! who daily summons your Creator to descend upon the altar, you have acted precisely contrary to the Creator; you have destroyed a being!

You, who know how to make a god out of a grain of wheat; was it not a god also which you had not long ago in this credulous and docile soul? The internal god of man, which is

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Those, who in their capacity of directors, saw females tête à tête at the nouses of either the one or the other, had less need to corrupt them at the altar.

called liberty, what have you done with it? You have placed yourself in its stead; in the place it occupied, of that power by which man is man, I see nothing!

Well! let this void be your punishment. Deep as you may penetrate, low as you may descend; you will find but a void; nothing that *wills*, and nothing that *can*. There all has perished that can be loved.

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It then proceeds to a literature review, followed by a description of the methodology used in the study. The results of the study are presented in the next section, followed by a discussion of the findings and their implications. The paper concludes with a summary of the main points and a list of references.



## PART THIRD.

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### THE FAMILY.

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#### CHAPTER I.

*Schism in the Family.—The Daughter, by whom educated.—Importance of Education, and Advantage of the first Occupation of the Mind.—Influence of the Priest over Marriage, which he keeps often after Marriage.*

THE drama which I have attempted to follow, does not always, thank Heaven, go to the last act, the submission of the will, and the extinguishment of personality. One cannot well observe where this drama stops, under the thick mantle of reserve, discretion, and hypocrisy, in which all the world in black is enveloped. The clergy should for other reasons redouble their watchfulness over themselves in the bustle of the world.\*

We must look out of the church to find the best light to discover what it conceals. We must seek it in the house, in the family. Regard it carefully. There is in the household a reflection, unfortunately too clear, of what passes elsewhere.

We have already said, that if you enter a house in the evening, one circumstance will almost always strike you. The mother and the daughter are of one council on one side; the father is on the other, and alone.

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\* A watchfulness which might be greater, with advantage, if we may judge from the public adventures of the abbés C. and N., who notwithstanding this publicity, do not arrest their course, as two others, of high rank, and well known, have done.

What is the key to this? It is that there is yet another person at that table, whom you do not see, ready to contradict and deny all that the father may say. That father returns home fatigued with the present, and full of cares for the future, and in place of repose and refreshment of his mind, he must renew the struggle with the past.

There is nothing in this to astonish us. By whom are our wives and daughters educated? We repeat it—by our enemies, by the enemies of the Revolution and of the future.

Do not cry out at this. Do not cite to me such and such of your sermons. What does it signify that you make such a democratic parade in the pulpit, if by covert and underhand means—by your little books which are reeled off by thousands and by millions—by your teaching, which is all concealed—by your confessional, the spirit of which transpires—you show what you are, the enemies of liberty. Subjects of a foreign prince, who deny the French church, what have *you* to say in France?

*Six hundred and twenty thousand girls* are educated by the nuns, under the direction of the priests. 'These girls will presently be women—mothers who will deliver to the priests, as far as in their power, their daughters and their sons.\*

The mother has already succeeded as far as her daughter is concerned. By a persevering siege she has vanquished the repugnance of the father. A man who, every evening, after the agitation of the business and the war of the world finds the war renewed at home, can perhaps stoutly resist for some time, but he must yield at last. Otherwise he will have neither time nor cessation, repose nor refuge. The house is uninhabitable. 'The wife, having to expect only rigor at the confessional so long as she remains unsuccessful, will make against you, every day and every hour, the war which is made

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\* M. Louandre gives the number at six hundred and twenty-two thousand in his conscientious statistics. *Revue des deux Mondes*, 1844.

against her—a war calm perhaps—calmly sharp, calmly implacable and active. Muttering at the fireside, sulky at the table, she hardly opens her mouth to speak or to eat. Then in bed comes the inevitable repetition, close to the husband's ear, of the lesson she has learned. 'The same tick of the same clock—who could hold out under it? What must he do?—Yield or go mad.

If the man should be so firm, resolute, and persevering, that he holds out against this protracted siege, the wife perhaps can sustain herself no longer. "How can I see her so miserable, languishing, unquiet, and ill? She fails visibly. I must save my wife!" Thus speaks the husband to himself. If he is not conquered by his wife, he is vanquished by his heart. The son on the morrow quits his school for *L'Ecole Chretienne*—the college for the little seminary. The daughter is led by the triumphant mother to that good boarding-school which the good abbé confesses and directs. She hardly spends a year there, when the boarding-school ceases to be worth any thing. She is yet too worldly. She is then sent to the sisterhood of which the abbé is the superior, into the convent, under his hand and under his key.

Affectionate father—be tranquil. Make sure of rest for your two ears while you may; for your daughter is in good hands, and you will not lack contradiction till the day of your death. A girl of spirit truly, who, above all things, has been carefully armed against you, she will take, whatever you may say, the other side of the argument!

What is most curious is, that generally the father is not ignorant that they are educating his daughter to oppose him. Wonderful man, what do you expect then! "Oh, she will unlearn all that—time, marriage, the world will efface it." Yes, for a moment, but only to reappear. With the first disappointments of the world it will all return. When she grows older, she will refer the subject to a granddaughter. The mother's master now will be the daughter's then, for your

contradiction, good man, in your last days, and for the despair and annoyance of her father and her husband. You will then again taste the fruits of this education. Education should be a small matter—a feeble influence, that the father can without danger leave to his enemies!

What—to possess the mind with all the advantages of the first occupancy! To write on the blank and unsullied leaf what he chooses, and *for ever*! For, know most assuredly, that the most you can do is to write afterwards *over* what was first written—to cross, in the length what was traced in the breadth. Confuse you may, but you cannot obliterate. It is the mystery of the young memory that, easy to take impressions, it is tenacious in holding them. The early love which seemed effaced at twenty, reappears at forty, aye at sixty. It is the last, the remainder that old age will keep when all else is forgotten.

“But the habit of reading—the press—our great modern power, which succeeds the early teaching, is it not an education much more efficient than that?” Count not upon it. The action of the press in part annuls itself. It speaks with a thousand voices, which reply to, and mutually annul each other. But early education makes not so much noise—it clamours not, but quietly reigns. See, in that little class, without other witness than his pupils, without control or contradiction, a man speaks, the absolute master, invested with ample power to punish and chastise. His voice alone, without the rod, is sufficient. The little trembling and believing creature, just from her mother’s arms, receives the words which are impressed upon her gentle mind, and fastened there as with rivets of brass.

If this is true of the school, how much more of the church; particularly in relation to the girl, who is the more docile, more timid, and more faithful to first impressions. What she hears for the first time in that grand church, under those echoing vaults, by the voice of that sombre man, then to her the



object of awe-struck fear—the words which he addresses to *herself*—deem not that she will ever forget them! Even if she could forget, they would be every week relearned. Woman is all her life in school;\* finding again in the confessional her school-bench, and her school-master; the only man whom she fears, the only one, as we have said, who in our present state of manners dares to insult a woman.

What an advantage he possesses in the convent where they place her, of having the first employment of her young spirit. It is he who imposes upon her the first severities; he grants the first indulgences also, which are so like tendernesses; he is the father, friend of the child plucked away from its mother's arms. The confidant of her first thoughts will be for a long time mingled with all the thoughts of the young girl. He has had the unique and special privilege, which the husband might envy, the virginity of her soul, the dawns of her will.

It is of that person, young men, that you must first ask the girl in marriage, before speaking to her parents. Make no false step here, or you will lose her. You shake the head, haughty children of the age—you will never bow the knee! I would inquire then if you would live alone, taking philosophy as the companion of your bosom? Otherwise, from this place I can see you, with all your valorous discourse, creeping furtively, with a step between a dog and a wolf, gliding into the church, and kneeling before the priest. There you were expected—there you are caught. You have not there a thought about you. You are in love, poor fellow, and do precisely as they would have you.

I wish only that this girl, thus purchased, was really yours. But with that mother and that priest, the same influence, for a moment diminished, will soon resume its strength. You have

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\* Especially by the catechisms, "*of perseverance*," "*Month of Mary*," &c., which retain the woman under the hand of the priest.

a woman minus soul and heart; and you will learn too late that he to whom she has given, knows how to keep them!\*

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\* We add to this chapter a fact, which, compared with what has been said in a preceding chapter on the ecclesiastical police, that the clergy never lose sight of the women who are educated in the convents under their direction. One of my friends, whose high character and position give his testimony great weight, told me, recently, that having placed a young relative in a convent, he learned from a sister that *they sent to Rome* the names of the pupils who most distinguished themselves! The centralization of such reports, concerning the daughters of families of consequence, in the Catholic world, might greatly facilitate combinations, and singularly serve the ultra montane policy. The order of the Jesuits may thus become a great marriage bureau.

## CHAPTER II.

*The Woman.—The Husband does not associate the Wife with himself, and rarely knows how to initiate her into his habits of Thought.—What the mutual Initiation should be.—The Woman consoles herself with her Son—he is taken from her.—Isolation and Ennui.—A pious Young Man.—The Priest and the Secular? Which, in one day, is the Man of Penance?*

WHEN first married, the husband has the only opportunity, truly to win his wife to himself; to expel foreign influence, and to establish his own for ever. Does he improve it? Rarely.

It is necessary at the commencement of their union, when he has much influence over her, that he associate her in his mental movements, in his business and opinions; that he initiate her into his purposes of life; that he should establish in his own activity an activity for her.

When the wife wishes with her husband, acts, thinks, and suffers with him, this is marriage. The worst that can happen to her is not that she suffers, but that she languishes alone in weariness, living apart from her husband, like a widow.—Who can wonder that she becomes estranged from him? Oh, if in the first hours when she became his, by making her participate in his ambition, his thoughts, and his inquietudes, they had lived together, moved by the same thoughts, he would have kept her heart! They might have become more firmly attached even by grief. To suffer together is to love the more.

The French woman, more than the English, the German, or any other, holds herself ready to second the man, and to become for him not merely a wife, but a companion, friend, associate, the *alter ego*. It is only by the commercial classes that this disposition is improved. See in the mercantile quarters, in the dark stores of the *Rue des Lombards*, or *La Verrierie*, the young woman, often rich by inheritance, who, ne-

vertheless, in her little separate counting room, keeps the books, and directs the boys and the clerks. With such a companion the husband will prosper. And the fireside is also a gainer. The husband and the wife, separated by the occupation of business during the day, unite so much the better at evening in a common thought.

Although it is not possible, in other careers to associate the wife so directly with the life of the husband, still she might be put in communication with his thoughts at least, if not a participant in his occupations. What renders this difficult, as I have not attempted to conceal, is the spirit of *speciality* which goes through our different professions, no less than the sciences. It pushes us more and more into minute details, while woman, less persevering, and, moreover, less required to make precise investigations, remains among generalities. The man who seriously wishes to initiate woman into his life—and he surely should so wish if he loves her—has need of much patience and gentleness. The two come together as opposite poles, charged by contrary modes of education. How, then, can you expect your young wife, all intelligent as she may be, to understand you at the first word? If she does not understand, it is most usually your own fault, your holding always to the dry, abstract and scholastic forms to which your education has habituated you. She, remaining in the sphere of common sense and of sentiment, knows nothing of your formularies, and rarely, very rarely, do you know how to translate them into human language. This demands address, determination, and mind. It requires, permit me to say, Monsieur, more intellect and wit than affection.

At the first word which his wife does not comprehend, the husband loses patience. "She is incapable—she is too frivolous!" He withdraws himself from her, and the mischief is done. On that day he lost much. If he had persisted, he would have drawn her with him gradually—clothed her with his life—and there would have been a true marriage. What



a companion has he lost—what a trustworthy confidant—what a zealous auxiliary! In that wife who, left to herself, seems little capable of reflection, he would have found, in his moments of difficulty, a light of inspiration—often a sage counsellor.

I have touched here a great subject, and should like to dwell upon it. But I cannot. I will say a word only. Man in modern life—a victim to the division of labour, condemned often to a narrow speciality, in which he loses the sentiment of general life, and falls into a mental atrophy, has need at home of a fresh and serene spirit. Less specialized and more in equilibrium, such a spirit in his companion might draw him from his exclusive occupation in his particular pursuit, and restore to his mind the gentle perception of the harmony of the great and beautiful. In this time of sharp competition, when the day is full of efforts, from which one returns home less wearied and broken with labour than with disappointments, a man needs at his family hearth a woman to cool and refresh his burning temples. To this workman—(are we any thing else in our specialities?) this man of the forge, wearied with his blows upon iron, she might open the living springs of the beautiful and good—of God and of nature. He could drink of the eternal waters in these moments—forget himself—become refreshed, and acquire new courage. Thus strengthened by her, he could give her, in turn, his powerful hand—lead her into the world with him—into his path of new ideas and of progress, the path to the future!\*

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\* Think not that it is possible to rest a moment at any one point. One must ascend or descend. If it be necessary that all our life should be progress, this necessity rules more in the natural family than in the artificial family of the convent. When the woman closes as woman, she commences as mother, then as grandmother. She has always new motives to recommence her moral education, and push it still farther. Woman should continually rise—for it is thus that she attaches herself to man. Nature has given her as steps in this upward progress, not the mere direc

Unfortunately the case is not thus. This beautiful exchange of heart and mind, which can alone make marriage real, I have so far been unable to find. The husband and wife endeavor at first to interchange ideas with each other, but presently each is discouraged. The husband, dried up by the arid wind of his affairs and business, becomes mute; he cannot draw a word from his heart. The wife, astonished and unquiet, interrogates the husband; but questions irritate him, and she dares no more to speak to him. As he would be tranquil, the wife in a revery at the fireside, absent in mind, in her turn, dreams her romance alone, and leaves him at his ease in his taciturnity.

She has a son—to her heart, before and above all. To him, could she be permitted, she would entirely devote herself. When she goes out, she gives him her hand, and presently her arm—he is a younger brother, a little husband. How large he has grown already—how time slips away! It is a pity that he grows so fast—now come separation—Latin—tears! Is it necessary that he should be a *savant*? Is it absolutely necessary, that he should enter at once into the violent paths of competition—that he early acquire the bad passions which we cultivate with so much care—pride, ambition, envy, hate? The mother would have him wait; he is yet young, and the colleges are so harsh! He would learn all the better at home, if they would only leave him with her! She will provide him instructors—she will, herself, direct his studies; she will go no more abroad.—“Impossible, Madam! impossible! you would make him a little woman.” The fact is, that the father, though he dearly loves his son, finds that in a regulated household, this bustle and noisy agitation, are intolerable. He is incapable of enduring any thing like it; fatigued, exhausted, and in ill humour, he wishes silence and repose.

Sage husband, who would lightly treat the objections of the

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tion of a single man, but the successive association of better generations, in each of which the mother is reproduced, renewed, and improved.

mother ; feel you not that it is, perhaps, as by an instinct of virtue, that she desires to keep her son with her—the pure and irreproachable witness before whom she had always been holy ? If you knew how beneficial the presence of that child has been to the household, you would desire to retain him there. While he remained, the house was blessed in him. While he is present, the family ties can hardly become relaxed. What led to marriage and the household ? The son whom you hoped. And what has held it together ? The son whom you have received. He is in the family, the object and the end ; the bond of union ; the mediator—I was about to say the all.

It cannot be too often repeated—the woman is alone. She is alone, having a husband—having borne a son, she is still alone ! Once at college, she sees him no more, except by permission, and at long intervals. After college, other prisons await the young man, and other exiles.

A brilliant soireé is given—enter into the well-lighted saloons, you see women seated in long rows, separated, and entirely alone. Go about four o'clock to the *Champs Elysées*, you see the same women winding slowly among the paths, each still alone in her carriage. Those in their carriages, and others in their shops—are alike alone.

In the life of women who have the misfortune to have nothing to do, there is nothing which may not be explained by the words isolation and ennui. Ennui which creates a languishing and negative disposition of the mind is, to a nervous woman a positive evil, which it is impossible to support. It fastens on and gnaws its prey. Whoever suspends the evil, a moment, seems to the sufferer a saviour.\* Ennui makes them

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\* Even love itself is less a remedy for ennui than has been imagined ; our fascinating modern romances have had an effect entirely contrary to what is supposed—*It is that of diminishing the passions.*—Real passion loses much, whatever may be said of it, in the face of these powerful pictures—it suffers by the comparison. The woman soon finds her personal

receive as friends, persons whom they know to be enemies—curious, envious, slanderous. Ennui makes them endure the romances in periodical portions, which are cut off at the very instant where the interest commences.\* Ennui leads them to those miscellaneous concerts, when the diversity of styles is a fatigue to the ear. Ennui draws them to a sermon which two thousand persons hear, and not one would read. Not even the luke-warm productions, half worldly and half devout, with which the neo-catholics inundate the faubourg St. Germain, find any readers among these poor victims of ennui. They support, those delicate and weakly women, a compound of musk and incense which would disturb the stomach of a person in health.

One of our young authors explains in a romance, all the advantage which there is in commencing gallantry with gallant devotion. This procedure is not new. I could only wish that those who have renewed the *Tartuffe*, would give him a little more wit.

That is the great lack of these modern hypocrites. Women listen to their veiled declarations, and their equivoques of love, as a duty, and to win salvation. She who from a friend the most valued, will feel scandalised with the merest word of friendship, will patiently permit, in a young Levite, this language of double meaning. A woman of mind, who knows the world—has read and seen—and possesses experience, does not wish to see, in a case like this. If the man has little talent, is stupid, and not agreeable—still “he has such good intentions!” and Father such a one responds, “he is a good young person.”

The fact is, that whatever priest, apropos of devotion, speaks

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romance feeble and dim in the presence of Indiana and of Valentine. Love soon fades and loses its tints, in the eyes of a woman of mind upon whose experience falls this pitiless light of romance.

\* I speak of the form in which they are published—not in disparagement of the admirable talent which some writers have shown.



of love, it is a merit in him; and even when he speaks in a manner feeble and insipid, it is a merit still with a woman ripe and ready to hear. The husband, should he be eminent, has always the fate of a man of real occupation; all engrossed, as they say, with material interests. And, in truth, he is occupied with the interests of his family; he is providing for his children in the future; he wastes his life to support the luxury in which the lady lives, beyond his fortune.

Perhaps the husband might answer, that however *material* the result of all this labour may be, it has with him a *moral* interest; that of the heart. Perhaps he will add, that in occupying himself with material interests, for the profit of others, in our assemblies, in our tribunals, and in a thousand different positions, he may prove himself more disinterested, and, consequently more spiritual, than all the second-hand dealers in spirituality, who make the church an exchange.

A contrast is indicated here, to which attention cannot be too much drawn. In the middle ages, the spiritual man—man of penance—who mortified the flesh, was the priest. By the studies to which he gave himself wholly, by watches and prayers in the night; by continual and excessive fastings, and frequent monastic bleedings he mortified his body. To-day there remains little of all that—the church has become all gentle. The priests eat and drink as we do; and if life is mediocre and mean with a great many, at least a living is generally assured to them. We may see, furthermore, the liberty of spirit with which they occupy the leisure of the women with frequent interviews.

Who is the *man of mortification* now, in these times of severe labour, ardent effort, and burning rivalry? It is the layman—the secular. Full of care, he labours day and night for his family, or for the state. Engaged often in a routine of business, too thorny and perplexing for his wife and children to become interested in it, he cannot communicate to them what fills his mind. At the hour of repose even, he speaks

little, but follows his train of thought. Success in business, in discovery, in science, is to be had only at the high price which Newton speaks of—“*Thinking always.*” Solitary among his own, he who achieves their glory or their fortune, does it at the risk of becoming a stranger to them.

The man of the church—the priest,—on the contrary, if we are to judge by what he has published, now studies little and invents nothing. Nor, on the other hand, does he carry on that war of mortifications against the flesh which the middle ages imposed; fresh and at ease, he can follow two occupations at once. By his assiduity and honied words, he wins the family of the too much occupied man, and meanwhile, mounting the pulpit hurls at the worldling the thunders of his eloquence.

## CHAPTER III.

*The Mother.—For a long time she alone can take charge of the Child.—The Child guarantees the Mother, the Mother the Child.—The Mother guarantees the Youth, and protects his native Originality.—Public Education, and the Father himself, check that Originality.—Maternal Feebleness.—The Mother wishes to make a Hero.—Heroic disinterestedness of maternal Love.*

WE have said: If you wish the family to be strong against the foreign influence which would dissolve it, leave the child at home as long as possible. Let the mother educate him, under the direction of the father, until the moment when he is claimed for public education, by that great mother, his country.\*

If the mother educates her child, one thing will certainly result from it. It is that she will remain very near her husband; having need of his counsels, and wishing continually to obtain from him new information. The true idea of the family will be realized, which is the initiation of the child by the mother, and of the mother by the husband. She wishes to retain her child—he is part of herself, rooted in her heart. When they would deprive her of him to educate him at a distance, it is a wrong. He weeps—she weeps, he exceeds her in grief. In these tears, where weakness only is generally seen, there is a serious lesson. It is *that he has still need of her*.

He is yet a nursling. Intellectual nourishment, like that of the body, should at first reach the child in the form of milk, fluid, gentle, sweet, *living*.† The woman alone can minister

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\* And even then it is a great advantage if the mother can see him every evening. She will notice at a glance, whatever has changed in him for the better or worse,—things which the preceptor, or the father even, would not have observed for a long time.

† This term excludes all the science of trumpery, mnemonics, &c.

it. Men would give a crust to the tender child, whose aching teeth had scarce pierced through, and strike him if he declines it. Give him milk still, in the name of heaven, and he will drink it willingly.\*

Who could have believed that the day would come, when men would thus charge themselves with the cares and nourishment of nurselings! Leave them to the women! It is a beautiful sight to see, the infant cradled in the arms of the man. But, have a care! The little thing is fragile, and in your gross hands may be broken!†

Between the school-master and the child the dispute is this. The man delivers science by methods proper to man, in the shape of fixed rules, by classifications well defined, under angular forms, as if crystalised. These prisms of crystal, however luminous they may be, wound by their points and angles. The child yet gentle, and like a fluid, can for a long time receive nothing which has not the fluidity of life. The master is angry and fretful with his slowness, and knows not how to understand him. One person alone in the world has the delicate tact in management of which a child has need. Gestation, incubation, and education, are words which remain for a long time synonymes—much longer than this world has fancied.

The influence of the woman over the child whose mind she developes, is greater and much more decisive than that which she exercised over the nursing. I know not that it is indispensable that a woman nourish her child from her breast; but it is necessary, I am very sure, that she feed him from her

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\* The painter of the sybils and of the prophets, Michael Angelo, himself a prophet, has indicated in his manner that the initiation of children belongs to the mothers. At the feet of these terrible origins, he has depicted the early education of children, by mothers under the most natural forms.

† A writer, full of thought, says that we should found schools for girls above those for boys. Each girl, who becomes a woman and a mother, will become a school in herself.



heart. Chivalry showed its knowledge that the most powerful agent of education is love. That alone did more to advance humanity in the middle ages, than all the disputes of the scholastics could do to retard it.

We also have our scholastics—the spirit of hollow abstractions and verbal disputes. We can resist this influence, only by prolonging the influence of the mother, by associating the woman with education, and giving to the child a beloved teacher. Love, they say, is a great master. That is true, above all, of the greatest, purest, and most profound of all loves.

Blind and imprudent that we are, we take the child from the mother when he is the most necessary to her. We deprive her of that dear occupation for which God has made her, and we are then astonished that this woman, thus cruelly wronged, now languishing and idle, surrenders herself to base dreams; that she submits herself anew to the old yoke, and that often while imagining that she remains faithful to duty, she listens to the tempter, who assumes to speak to her in the name of God.

Be prudent; be wise; leave her son to her. It is necessary that a woman should always love. Leave her then that more than lover whom nature has given her—him whom she had preferred to all lovers. While you are absorbed in your affairs, (your passions, perhaps?) leave to her the arm of that slight and tall young man—she will be proud and happy. You fear that, watched over too long by a woman, he will become a woman. But it is she who will become a man, if you will but leave her her son. Try it, and you will be yourself astonished at the change. From little journeys on foot to long rides on horseback, nothing will deter her, believe me. She commences in good courage the exercises of the young man, she returns to his age, and renews herself in that new life. You yourself, on returning to your home, and seeing your Rosalind, will think you have two sons.

It is a general rule to which I have hardly seen an exception, that superior men are always the *sons of their mothers*, whose moral imprint, as well as features, they inherit. Does this surprise you? I will add, that without her the son will never become what a man should be. The mother alone is patient enough to develop the young creature, by managing his freedom. It is necessary to take care, great care, how you place a child, young still, and too pliable under the hand of strangers. The best intentioned, by weighing too heavily upon him, risk a bending of the shoulders, from which he will never recover. The world is full of men who, from having carried a heavy yoke too long, remain slaves all their days. Too forced and precocious an education breaks in them the something—the genius and ingenuousness, which is the flower of manhood.

The sacred ingenuousness and freedom of character which are born with one—by whom are they now respected? It is almost always in these that one is wounded; if he is blamed, it is on account of these. Hardly does young nature awaken and flourish in its liberty, when all, astonished, shake their heads. “What, a living flower! Who has ever seen the like before? Let us stifle it at once!” The iron cramps are preparing—be wise, oh flower—wither and withdraw thyself!

This poor little development, against which all are united with one accord—what is it, I pray you, but the characteristic, special and original, by which that being would be distinguished from others, and add a new character to the great human variety—a genius, perhaps, to the illustrious line of genius! The sterile spirit is almost always a plant which, too closely fastened to the dead wood which serves as its support, has dried like it, and becomes more and more assimilated in character with it. Well subdued, and very regular, you need fear here no eccentricity. The tree is a barren one, which will yield no fruit.

Do I wish to say that support is useless—that the young

plant should be left to itself? Nothing is further from my thoughts! I believe, on the contrary, in the necessity of two educations—that of the family, and that of the country. Let us point out their different influences.

Public education, better conducted now certainly than ever before—what are its purposes and its end? It tends to harmonise the child with his country, and with that great country, the world. It is in that that its propriety and necessity consist. It proposes first to give him the fund of ideas common to all; it is intended to render him rational that he may not be in discordance with those he meets; it prevents him from jarring in the great concert in which he is to take his part. It subdues him that he may not be too erratic in his lively sallies.

Such is public education. The education in the household is that of liberty—but even there, are obstacles and checks to the natural impulse. The father subdues that impulse; his foresight imposes on him the duty of early introducing that young steed into the furrow in which he must labour. Too often it happens that the father misunderstands his child, and consulting exterior fitness above every thing else, seeks the beaten and profitable track, rather than that to which nature has called him. How many a high-mettled courser has thus been condemned to run round in the ring! Poor liberty! Who then has eyes to see, and a heart to direct thee? Who will have the patience, the untiring indulgence to support thy first steps, and to encourage thee, when jaded by the stranger, the indifferent, the father himself? God alone who has made that being, having made, understands him well enough to see and love the good, even among the bad. God, I say, and the mother in his guidance, for here she is his instrument.

When it is recollected how short is the average term of life, and how great a number of men die in youth, we should hesitate how we abridge that first and best period, in which the child, free under its mother, lives under grace, and not under

the law. But it is true, I think, that the time which we call lost, under the mother's direction, is exactly the period, single, precious, and once past, irreclaimable, where, amid puerile sports, sacred genius essays its first flights. It is thus that the wings put forth, and the eaglet aspires to fly—oh, abridge not this precious period! Drive not, before the time, this new man from the maternal paradise. Wait yet a day—to-morrow will be quite soon enough to bend his back to labour, and break him to the furrow. To-day leave him there yet, that he may receive strength and life, and breathe with a good heart the generous air of freedom!

An education too exacting, zealous, and disquieting is a great danger for children. We are continually increasing the weight of study, till the inner man succumbs. Such a person is all Latin, another is all mathematics. Where is the *man*, I pray you?\*

It was precisely the *man* that the mother loved and directed. It was the man that she respected in the steps of the infant. She seemed to withdraw her action, her eye even, that he might act, and become strong and free. But at the same time she surrounded him always, as with an invisible embrace.

There is a peril, I know, in this education of love. What love would do, is to immolate self, sacrifice every thing, interests, convenience, habit, life, if necessary. The object of all this sacrifice may, in his childish egotism, receive all this denial as a thing of course, and permitting itself to be treated as an idol, inert and immoveable, become but the more incapable of action, as the more is done for him.

This actual danger is balanced by the ardent ambition of the maternal heart, which places in the child an infinite hope, and burns to realise it. Every mother, whatever may be her

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\* If there is danger that the moral man will succumb in schools too heavy and too learned, what shall we say of those where the teachers directly attack the morals, by teaching the pupils dishonour and treachery among themselves? See a subsequent note.



deficiencies, has a fine faith; that her son must be a hero, in action or science, it matters not which. All that has failed her, in her sad experience of the world, she looks forward to realise in him. All the miseries of the present are redeemed in advance by that splendid future. All is miserable to-day; but he will become great, and all will be great with him. Oh poetry! Oh hope! Where are the limits of the maternal thought! "I am only a woman—but here is a man! I have given a man to the world!" One thing only embarrasses her. Will the child be a Bonaparte, a Voltaire, or a Newton?

If it becomes absolutely necessary that he leave her, that he be carried far away—she consents. Must she pluck out her own heart—she will do so. Love is capable of every thing, of sacrificing itself even. Yes, let him go; let him follow his destiny, and accomplish the splendid dreams with which she was visited, while he rested in her bosom, or upon her knees. And then, incredible as it may seem, this timid woman, who, but yesterday, hardly dared that he should walk alone, lest he might fall, has become so brave that she envies him in careers the most hazardous, upon the sea, or even in the rude wars of Africa. She trembles, and is ready to die with fear, and yet bears up. What can thus sustain her? Her faith; the child cannot be lost, because he is to be a hero.

He returns—and how changed! What! is this manly soldier my son! Leaving her a child he has returned a man. He is in haste to be married—and with this comes another sacrifice, not the least that she has made. He must then love another. The mother, to whom he has always been the first and the last, must take the second place in his heart henceforward—a place how little, in his passionate love for another! But she seeks and chooses her rival—she loves her because of him—she attires her, she puts herself among the train who conduct them to the altar, only asking there that she may not be forgotten!

## CHAPTER IV.

*Love.—Love elevates, not absorbs.—False Theory of our Adversaries, and their dangerous Practice.—Love wishes to create itself an Equal, which freely loves.—Love in the World, and in the civil World.—Love in the Family little understood in the Middle Ages.—Religion of the Fireside.*

IN the preceding chapter have I, seduced by a pleasanter subject, lost all sight of the argument which I have followed in my book?

I believe, on the contrary, that I have thrown a strong light upon my subject. Maternal love, (that miracle of heaven,) and maternal education, aid us in comprehending what all education should be, all direction and all initiation.

The singular advantage which the mother possesses in education is, that being herself above all, devoted, disinterested, she respects the growing personality in the little thing which becomes a person. She is the defender of his individuality. She wishes, at all expense to herself, that he may act according to his genius, rise and increase in knowledge and strength.

What could we wish in direction and true education? Precisely what love would have, in its highest and most disinterested idea—that the young creature rise. Take the word (*s'élèver*) in its full sense, as expressing the volition of the child, and the aid of the teacher. She wishes that the child may raise himself above himself, to the level of her who gives the aid, above that if possible. The strong, far from absorbing the weak, wishes to render it strong, and lead it to equality. It tends to the development, not only of the things in which teacher and pupil agree, but of those in which they differ; supporting that which has an original free action, exciting that in which the pupil is sluggish, and making continual appeals

to the individual, in that which is most personally and individually his—the will. The dearest wish of love is to sustain the moral force, the will of the person loved, to the highest degree, that of heroism.

The mother's ideal of education is the true one. It is to make a hero; a man powerful in acts, and fruitful in works—*who will, who can, who does.*

Let us compare this ideal with that of ecclesiastical education and direction. This would make a saint, not a hero; it believes the two opposed. It deceives itself in the idea of holiness, making it not harmony with God, but absorption in him—the extinguishment of the soul, and its loss of volition. All their theology, when pressed to a conclusion, must, unless they be content to remain in an inconsistency, lead, by an invincible tendency, to this abyss. It was in that that it ended, as it must end, in the seventeenth century. The great directors of that time, who, coming last, had the analyses of the subject, demonstrate plainly the result, which is *extinguishment*, (*anéantissement*)—the art of extinguishing activity, will, and individuality. “Became a *nothing*?” “Yes, but in God.” And is *this* God's will? The Creator, it would rather seem that he should will that his creatures resemble him—that they *do* and *create*. You misunderstand God, the Father.

This false theory is convicted of falsehood in its practice. Following it closely, we have seen that it reaches an end contrary to its promise. It promised to absorb man in God, and in return for that absorption, promised that he should partake of the infinite into which he enters. But in reality it only absorbs man in man, in infinite littleness! The directed is extinguished in the director—of the two persons there remains but one. The other has perished as a *person*, and has become a *thing*.

Devout education, treated in our First Part, among the most faithful directors, and with women very pious, gives two results, which I will state thus:

1st. A holy man, who for a long time speaks to a holy woman of the love of God, converts her infallibly to love.

2d. If this love remains pure, there is a hazard still, entirely personal. It is whether the *man* is a saint; for the woman directed, losing little by little all her own will, must be at length entirely at his mercy. It remains then to say that a man who possesses all power, and uses none, a miracle of abstinence, is continually renewed among us.

The priest has always believed himself, in his own judgment, a great master of love. Habituated to govern himself, to dissimulation and windings, he believes that he alone possesses the true art of managing the passion. He advances under cover, by the paths of equivocal. He proceeds with safety, and is careful to proceed so uniformly at all times in his gait, that nothing unusual in his manner betrays his purposes. He laughs under his hood at our transported vivacity, and our imprudent frankness—at our flights without rule or measure, which carry us beyond our intentions.

If love is the art of entrapping the soul—of reducing it by authority and by insinuation, of breaking it by fear, to betray it by indulgence, in such a manner that, wearied and exhausted, it permits itself to be covered with an invisible net:—if *such* be love, then certainly the priest is its most able teacher!

Beautiful teachers—learn of the ignorant, the artless, what, with all your petty arts, you have never known: learn what is love, that sacred thing! There should be a heart sincere, for this is the first condition, honor and truth in the means by which you win the heart; and the second is generosity, which would not enslave, but enlarge and strengthen that which it loves, to love in liberty—free to love or not. Come, listen to two seculars, two comedians, Moliere and Shakspeare. In this they are wiser than you. One who loves, is asked concerning the loved object: “What is his height?” “*Just as high as my heart,*” is the answer.\*

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\* Shakspeare—As You Like It.



This noble formula is that of love, and that of education, of all instruction; equality sincerely wished, and the desire to raise the loved object to itself, and make it an equal. "Just as high as my heart."

Shakspeare has said, and Moliere has done. He has been in the highest degree the "Genius of Education,"\* who desires to raise and free; who loves, in equality, liberty and light. He has punished as a crime the unworthy love which captures the mind by art, isolating it in ignorance, and holding it a serf and a captive.† In his life, conformed to his works, he has given the noble example of that generous love which wishes the loved object should be the *equal of the lover*; which fortifies it, and gives it arms against himself. This is love—and this is faith. It is faith that sooner or later the emancipated being must return to the most worthy; for is not he the most worthy who would be freely loved?

Nevertheless we must weigh well the import of the serious words, *his equal*,‡ and all its dangers. It is as if the Creator said to the creature, whom he has made, and whom he has emancipated: "Thou art free. The power by which thou wast enlarged holds thee no longer. Apart from me, and held only by the heart and by gratitude, thou canst freely act and think, and even against me, if thou hast the will."

Behold the sublimity of love, and why God pardons many things to charity. It is that in his infinite disinterestedness, wishing to make a free being, and to be by that being freely loved, he permits the danger of the disloyalty and ingratitude of the

\* Ingenious and very just remark of E. Noel.

† In the *Ecole des Femmes*, and elsewhere.

‡ In this connection, the words "his equal," are of course to be taken with very limited signification. If there were any equivalent, we should substitute it, as in the original French the word *egal* in a comparison, has a much more limited sense than our word *equal*. We might have made a circumlocutory rendering, but that would have destroyed the connection. We make this note rather to exonerate the author from absurdity, than because we fancy the reader would not at once make the limitation.

object. Power to act includes power to love, and the contingency of the diversion of the love of the creature from the creator. That hand, once feeble and now become strong, has been armed, and it may be turned against the love that armed it; in the emancipation there is nothing reserved.

Extend the idea of love from the love of the mother to universal love—to that which makes the life of the natural and of the civil world. In the natural, life the most active continually evoked from kingdom to kingdom—is lighted and ascends. Love sustains, from the profoundest depths, the beings which it emancipates, and arms with liberty, with power to do good or evil, to act even against that which has created and made them free.

And in the civil world, is not the work of love charity, patriotism, call it what you will, analagous to the work of love in the natural? It calls to social life, to political power, those who had before no life among men. It raises the feeble and poor from their rude hovels, where they struggle with hand and foot against misfortune, and places them in liberty and equality.

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The inferior degree of love is that which would absorb—the superior that which would sustain life, a life energetic and fruitful in deeds. It finds its pleasure in raising, augmenting, making a new creature of the loved object. Its happiness is to see arise under its breath a new creature, which may either serve or injure its benefactor.

“But is not love in this disinterestedness a rare miracle—one of those short instants when our selfish egotism is illuminated by light from heaven?”

No—the miracle is permanent. You see it—you have it under your eyes, and turn away from it. It is rare, perhaps, with the lover, it is ever present with the mother. Man, who hast sought God from heaven to the abyss—seek him at thy fireside!

The divine idea of Christianity has placed the family relation upon the altar. There placed, there it was left during fifteen hundred years. In the middle ages, the poor dreaming monk\* saw it in vain. He could never understand the mother as an agent of instruction. He contemplated the Virgin†—he has left us Our Lady.

What the monk could not, thou canst do. Oh! man of modern times. Let it be thy work; no longer shutting thyself up in proud abstractions; no longer disdaining infants and children, who could direct thy life—let it be thy work to teach them science and the world. They will teach *thee*, God.

Let the family circle be reinstated. The shattered edifice of religion and patriotism will then resume its place. That humble hearth-stone, in which we see now only the good old domestic Lares, will become the corner stone of the temple, and the foundation of the city.

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My *book* is sealed, but my *heart* is not, even against the priests. One word then more.

I have spared *them*—they have attacked *me*. Well, even now, it is not the priests that I attack. This book is not against them.

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\* The middle ages, always too high or too low, never knew any middle path. The triumph of the woman is all ideal in Beatrice, and the *passion* of the woman all too low in Griseldis, who even as a mother resigns herself. The same ignorance of the middle path is annoying in the sermons of the present day. They are always too high or too low—woman is a saint or a prostitute. They never speak of the wise matron—the mother of a family. This spirit of exaggeration renders their language singularly sterile.

† In the poetry of the monks, of celibates, one sees this every where. They make the virgin younger and younger, more and more a child, less and less a mother. In a thousand legends, vain and indelicate, they overlooked what might have been a fruitful theme for the middle ages—the *education of Jesus* by his mother. It is evident that he had the *maternal heart*. He wept for Lazarus. He said, “Suffer the little children to come unto me.”

It attacks only their slavery ; the situation in which they are held, against nature—the preposterous conditions which render them at once unfortunate and dangerous. If it should have any effect, it will prepare for them the day of deliverance—of freedom of the body, and freedom of the mind.

Let them say and do what they choose, they shall never prevent me from interesting myself in their fate. I impute nothing to them. They are at liberty neither to be just, nor to love, nor to hate ; they receive from their superiors the words which they must speak ; their sentiments ; and their thoughts. Those who thrust the priests against us, are the same persons who are at this moment organizing against them, the most cruel inquisition.\* Though they may become more and more unfortunate and isolated, they will exert so much the more their unquiet activity, though they have neither fireside, country, family, nor heart, still can they labour. To serve a dead system, it is necessary that the dead, the wandering dead, labour without sepulchre, and without repose.

With the words “unity of the universal church,” they have been compelled to quit the paths of the church of France.—They have discovered now what that Rome is : merely a Jesuit bishop. The universality of mind (which is the only true universality) Rome lost a long time ago, if she ever had it. It

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\* It appears from the details which a journal gives on the last ecclesiastical shifts, that the greater part of the bishops impose upon their priests the Jesuitical rule which they call the *manifestation of conscience*; which compels them to confess to a confessor *appointed by the bishop*, and to denounce one another to the higher ecclesiastical authorities. The obligation is extended to the women whom the vices of the clergy have compromised. See *La Bien Social*, a Journal of the Secondary Clergy, November, 1844. That Catholic journal, at the end of its first year, has a subscription of three thousand priests. See also an excellent article from the *Reveil de l'Ain*, November 17, 1844, and the courageous letters of M. l'Abbé Thions, in the *Bien Public* of Macon. When one still speaks, with such a mountain upon his heart, he must possess good courage.—We name with respect those two saints, the Alignols. But what are they doing on the road to Rome ? What do they expect to find in that empty sepulchre ?



has, in part, been discovered in modern times, and that in France. For the last two centuries, it may be said that morally France has been the pope. The authority is here, under one form or another. Here, by Louis XIV., by Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau, by the Constituante and the Code Napoleon, Europe has had her centre. All other nations are eccentric.

The world goes on, flying on, very far from the middle ages. For the most part, people have forgotten that period; I shall never forget it. The miserable parade that the present priests, most unworthy representatives of that era, make under my eyes, will not change my heart toward that sombre and melancholy time, with which so long I have been on terms of friendship; for which I have so long suffered.\* The sympathies which I retain for the past, the ashes of which I have re-awakened, prevent my being indifferent to those who most unfaithfully occupy the places of the priests of that era. I hate not, but simply compare, and am sad. I cannot pass before Notre Dame, that I do not say in the words of the ancient, "*O miseram domum, quam dispari dominaris domino!*" "Oh melancholy edifice, how widely changed are thy masters!"

I have never been found insensible to the humiliations of the church, nor to the sufferings of the priest. I have had them all present to my imagination, and my heart; I have followed that unfortunate man through the career of privations, the miserable life into which a hypocritical authority has dragged him. In his solitude by the hearth-stone, melancholy and cold, where often he weeps at night; let him be sure that there is a man who weeps with him, and that I am that man.

Who would not have pity upon this victim of social contradictions? The laws direct him in contrary paths, as if they would make him their sport. The canonical law says, No;

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\* Since 1833, I have felt the wish, as I then expressed the hope, of the transformation of the principle of the middle ages. "It will transform itself to live yet again." History of France, last page of Vol. II.

the civil law says, Yes. If he takes the civil law as serious, the man of the civil law, the judge, from whom he expects protection, acts the priest, seizes him by his robe, and sends him degraded under the yoke of the canonical law. Let the laws be made to accord, that we may find some authority for our conduct. If this is a law, and the other, totally opposed, may also be considered a law, what must he do who believes both are sacred?\*

How deeply have I felt for those unfortunates! How earnestly have I wished that they could come out of a state which denies nature, and the progress of the world! Oh! that I could, with my own hands, relight the hearth-fire of the poor priest; restore him to the first rights of man; replace him in truth and life, and say to him, "Come out of that deadly shade, and seat thyself with us in God's own sun-light!"

Two men have always sadly touched my heart—two solitaries—two monks—the soldier and the priest. I have often reviewed in thought, and always with sadness, these two great sterile armies, to whom intellectual nourishment is refused, or doled out with so sparing a hand. Those from whom the heart is severed, should have strengthening food for the mind.

What will be the remedies for these serious evils? We essay not to designate them here. The means and the process, time will discover, when the day arrives. This, however, one

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\* The very Catholic clergy in the south of Germany, have formally said that the vow of celibacy, with which this law disagrees, should cease; that the church may associate herself in the progress of the times with the true modern state, which is marriage, while that of the middle ages, in idea at least, was celibacy. The situation of the priest, alone and not alone, free and not free, in the midst of a world at discord with him, suggests the idea of a man condemned to a cell which he must carry every where with him. Nothing could be more certainly fitted to make a man mad. (See the beautiful articles of Leon Foucher.) All the world has read the history of that Benedictine Abbé (of Tyrol, if I remember) who wished not to violate his vows, and not being able to obtain remission of them, stabbed himself to the heart.

may prophesy—that the day will come, when the words soldiers and priests will designate, not so much different classes, as different ages of men. The word priest in its origin, indicated an old man. A *young* priest is nonsense.

The soldier, that is to say, the young man, after the school of infancy and the school of business, goes to prove himself in the great national school of the army, to strengthen himself before taking the fixed seat of marriage and a family. The military life, when the state becomes what it should be, will be the conclusion of his education, mingled with studies, voyages, perils, experience in which may be of profit in the new family which the man will found on his return.

The PRIEST, on the contrary, in the highest sense, should be an old man, as he was in the beginning; or at the least, a man of maturity, who had learned life, knew the family relations, and had acquired a knowledge of the great family of man. Sitting among the elders, like the ancients of Israel, he could communicate to the young the treasures of experience. He should be the man of all—the man who belonged to the poor; the peaceful arbiter, who could prevent litigation; the moral physician, who could prevent evils by well-timed warning. For such a duty, no young man, unquiet and stormy, would answer. It should be a man who had seen much—learned much—suffered much; and who had found out at length, in his own heart, the words of sweet counsel, which should introduce us to the world to come.

1870

1870



## APPENDIX.

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NOTE.—We place here the Author's Preface to the Third Edition, as an Appendix ; giving it this position in preference to any other, because that it is in some sort an answer to remarks provoked among the adverse party, by previous editions.

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### PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

THIS book has produced an effect upon our adversaries for which we were unprepared. It has cost them the loss of all discretion, and of all self-respect—nay, more than this, of all that respect for the sanctuary of which it is their duty to give us an example. In their pulpits, in open church, they preach against a living man—indicating him by his name, and designating this book and its author for the hatred of those who know not how, and never will read the work. From their lanching these furious preachers against us, it is evident that the chiefs of the clergy must have felt themselves sorely attacked.

We have—it would appear—trenched upon a point too dangerous. Woman—this is the theme on which they are found so sensitive! The spiritual direction and government of woman is the vital part of ecclesiastical power, which the priests will defend even to the death. Strike, if you please, at any thing else, but not at that! Attack their dogmas until you are weary—they will ridicule your zeal,\* and continue their cold and lifeless declamation. But if you think to touch the reserved point—menace the citadel—the affair becomes serious. The priests forget themselves, and lose their discretion.

It is indeed a melancholy spectacle to see pontiffs and elders of the people gesticulating, stamping, foaming at the mouth, and

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\* They will hardly even take the trouble to notice mere abstractions. A young eclectic had declared himself against all religious revelations—he would scarcely tolerate religion as a provisional institution. But at the same time he attacked an adversary of the priesthood—and the grateful priests caress the free-thinker, and hug him to their hearts.

grinding their teeth like madmen.\* My young friends, do not regard them. Epileptic convulsions have sometimes a contagious effect on the spectator. Leave them—let us withdraw, and resume our pursuits without loss of time. “Art is long—Life short.”

I recollect to have read, in the correspondence of St. Charles Borromeo, that one of his friends, a grave person in authority, having censured I know not what Jesuit, who was entirely too fond of confessing female devotees, the ecclesiastic visited him in a fury to inflict condign punishment. The Jesuit felt his own strength—a preacher in high vogue—a favourite at court—and a still greater favourite at Rome, he believed that he had no need of moderation or prudence. He gave himself full vent—was violent and insolent to the utmost of his ability. His grave censor remained calm and unmoved. The Jesuit lost all command of himself, and descended to the basest insults. The other, firm and collected, made no reply, but permitted the priest to rave and threaten at his pleasure, and to gesticulate, uninterrupted, with both hands and arms, while he looked steadily and curiously at his feet. “Why did you watch his feet so narrowly?” asked a witness of this interview, after the priest had taken his leave.—“Oh,” replied the censor, still without changing his grave countenance, “it was because I expected every moment to see the

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\* This language will not appear exaggerated to those who have read the furious libel of the bishop of Chartres. One journal demands of me how I have had the self-command to refrain from attacking him in reply. But his foolish violence is far less criminal than the whining insinuations which our adversaries make in their books and journals, and in the saloons. They attribute to me the deeds of other men of whom I am not even a relative, (for instance M<sup>rs</sup>helet of Languedoc, the poet and soldier in the restoration.) They pretend to believe, though I declared to the contrary at the end of my preface to the first edition, that this book was my course of lectures for 1844, and caused a small petition to come from Marseilles praying my removal from the professorship. But far from wishing to stifle the voice of my opponents, I have desired for their expression of opinion all the liberty I have claimed for my own. In my lecture of the 27th February, 1845, I said:

“I see among you the greater part of those who have aided me to maintain from this chair the liberty of speech. We respect this liberty in our adversaries. This is not a concession of chivalry—but a point of simple duty. It is, moreover, essential to the cause of truth that the utterance of objection should not be suppressed. It is necessary that arguments should be freely brought forward on all sides. Trust to the truth that it will prevail and conquer. We pass away—truth endures and triumphs—but so far as its adversaries can interpose their influence, the triumph of truth is clouded with doubt.”

hoofs betray themselves. That demoniac might well prove to be the tempter inhabiting a Jesuit!"

A prelate weeps in advance over the fate of the priests whom we would consign to martyrdom. This *martyrdom* is what they themselves, high and low, protest against, to wit, *marriage*.

We think, without recalling the too well known inconveniences of the present celibacy of the priest, that if he *must* be the counsellor in the family, he should understand his duty. As a husband—or better yet, in widowhood, of mature age and experience—having *loved* and *felt*, he would at once possess more heart and more wisdom. The domestic affections throw a light upon the mysteries of our moral nature, which no conjecture or theory can supply.

It is true that the defenders of the celibacy of the clergy have drawn latterly such a picture of marriage, that many may hereafter fear to adventure in it. These apologists of the clergy have advanced upon all that modern romancers and socialists have said against the legal union. Marriage, which lovers imprudently seek as a new bond of affection, would appear by these new representations only a state of warfare. People unite to quarrel. Truly it were impossible to place the efficacy of the sacrament lower than this. The sacrament of union, according to these teachers, serves no purpose, and accomplishes nothing, unless a third party come always between the united—I should say between the combatants—in order to separate them.

It has usually been supposed that for a marriage two persons sufficed. This is changed. In the new system, as it has been propounded, there are three constituent elements:—First, the Man, strong and violent; second, the Woman, by nature feeble; and third, the Priest, born a strong man, but studying to render himself woman-like, that he may resemble the wife, and thus, partaking of the nature of both, may interpose himself between them—between those who should become one! This is an infinite departure from the idea which, from the commencement of the world, has been entertained of marriage!

But this is not all. It is avowed that the intervention spoken of is not an impartial favouring, now of the husband, and now the wife, as either has need. No! it is the woman alone to whom the priest addresses himself—it is her with the protection of whom he charges himself, against her natural protector. He is to be leagued with her to transform the husband.

If it were well established that marriage, instead of being the union of two persons, is a league of one of the two with a stranger, wedlock would become rare. The alliance of two against one seems a confederacy a little too unequal—few would have temerity sufficient to tempt such a chance. Marriages of money, even now too frequent, would then become the only ones. People hopelessly in debt could not always escape marriage—the insolvent, for instance, who should be placed by a merciless creditor between the alternatives of a wedding or a prison.

To transform, re-create, refound—to change man's nature—a great and difficult undertaking! But it would be meritorious only if effected with the free will—not if performed by a sort of domestic persecution—a war of the fireside. Above all, it is necessary to know whether, by this transformation, amelioration is intended. Is it purposed to ascend? Is it to elevate man's nature in the moral world—to make him become more virtuous, more wise? If so, speed the work! But what if this transformation prove to be a change for the worse!

The wisdom which the priests propose for us does not include science. "Science—literature—what do they import? They are things of luxury—ornaments of the mind, but foreign to the soul!" We shall not contest this here, but pass over the vain distinction which opposes the mind to the soul, as if ignorance were innocence—as if it were possible, with a literature poor, faded, and inane, to possess the gifts of the soul and of the heart.

But where are the evidences of heart among these men? Will they show us a shadow of such a possession? How does it happen that those who charge themselves with cultivating its development in others, give themselves a dispensation from exhibiting any signs of a heart? The living fountain of a noble heart, when one truly possesses it, cannot be concealed. It will burst out, do what you will. Choke it in one place and it forces its way forth in another. One might as well strive to shut up the sources of great rivers—to obliterate the Rhone and the Rhine. We acknowledge that such images as this are ill-cited in this connection. In what a dry, barren Arabian desert am I placed by the consideration of this subject!

Let us enter a church. Behold a multitude—a crowd of people, who, weary of wandering, enter here panting and thirsty of soul. They wait with open mouths, in the hope of words of re-



freshing. Will there fall upon their parched lips one poor drop of dew?

A man mounts the pulpit—a decent and proper man enough, but dry and heartless. He will not touch the sympathies. It suffices him to *prove*. He designs a grand scaffolding of argument, with lofty logical pretensions, and great solemnity in his premises. From these he jumps to glaring conclusions—the middle term always being—“these things cannot be demonstrated!” Oh, why then, most lame logician, open with such a grand flourish of *proofs*!

Well then do not attempt to prove! *Love!* love your kind, and we will hold you acquitted of all! Say but one word of *heart* to feed that crowd! All those heads you see surrounding your pulpit—those reverently uncovered heads, are not blocks of stone—they represent so many lives and souls. These form the rising generation—to-day they are the *future*—to-morrow they will be *the world*. Happy natures—full of energy—inexperienced and as God made them—running hitherto undaunted, without thought or heed, upon the edge of precipices. Their youth—their future—their danger—their hopes encompassed with peril—do none of these things move you? Will nothing open your paternal heart?

A little beyond see that brilliant crowd—women and gay flowers. Beneath all this splendor which rejoices the eye there is, oh how much suffering! One word, I pray you, in your public ministrations for them! They are your daughters—those who, you know, with so much trusting resignation come each evening to weep at your feet. They trust in you—they tell you all—you know their wounds of spirit. Find then for them a word of consolation. It is not difficult. What man who holds the bleeding heart of woman in his power, can but feel the healing words of consolation rising in his bosom! The dumb man, lacking words, would find tears—which are better still.

What shall we say to those who, before so many suffering, trusting invalids, offer to them as the whole remedy, the academical spirit of brilliant common-places, old paradoxes, Bonapartism, socialism! What can we say?

There must be here, it is necessary to acknowledge, great sterility and poverty of heart. Ah, you are hard and dry! I felt this the other day, when in passing, I read on the walls a mandate of the archbishop. It spoke of a suicide, of a miserable who had killed himself in the church of St. Gervas. What caused the deed?

Was it misery, passion, folly, melancholy, a moral sinking in the gloomy season of December? Nothing was said of the cause—the body was there, and the blood upon the stones—but no reason, and no clue to one. By what gradation of chagrin, disappointment, grief, could he have arrived at an act thus contrary to nature? What circles of the moral hell had he descended, to reach the bottom of the abyss? Who could answer? No one. But every man, with a little imagination, could read in these mute and dark clouds of uncertainty, something which should prompt him to weep and to pray.

But he who would weep and pray is not M. Affre. Read the mandate. He has compassion for the sullied church, and for the stained pavement, pity—but for the dead, malediction! Meanwhile, Christian or not, culpable or not, was he not still a man, Monseigneur? Could you not, in condemning the suicide, have let fall, in passing, one word of pity? No! not a human feeling—nothing for the poor soul which, besides its misfortunes here, (terrible, no doubt, since it could not support them,) has pushed itself, alone and accursed, upon that terrible adventure—the other life, and the judgment! May so much misery, and this very harshness,\* after death be counted to him something!

Another circumstance very different, made some time since an analogous impression upon me. I had called to visit the venerable Sister \*\*\* upon business. She was absent, and two persons, a lady and an aged priest, waited with me her return. The lady seemed to have been called there by some motive of benevolence. The priests, as priests are lords and masters in all houses of charity, made himself quite at home, and to while away the time, attended to his correspondence upon the desk of the sister. At the end of each note he listened a moment to the lady. Her sweet figure, upon which her years had a little weighed, possessed a peculiar character of benevolence. Perhaps she might not have attracted my attention, but there was an air about her which interested me. Was it the trace of disappointment and suffering? I heard without intentionally listening. She had lost her son.

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\* This harshness has been conspicuous in the archbishop, in regard to the ecclesiastical library of Paris, which prints for all France. The predecessors of M. Affre never wished to put in force against these ancient and pious houses the *strictum jus*—that monopoly which one law seems to secure to the bishops. These houses supposed that no one suspected them of deriving an enormous benefit.

It was her only son, full of life, vivacity and courage; a heroic youth, who, coming from the Polytechnic School, had left all—riches, rank, and such a mother, and looking neither to the right nor left, had hurried to Marseilles, to Algiers, against the enemy—to death!

The poor woman possessed with her one idea seized from time to time an instant to put in a word. She had need of a listener—she thirsted for commiseration. The scene was extremely touching and interesting—natural, and not melo-dramatic. Hers were sighs and complaints without tears—a grief that melted the spectator into sympathy by its very moderation.

She was evidently wasting her words. The mind of the priest was elsewhere. He could not do otherwise than listen, and make some kind of a reply—the lady was rich, and her carriage stood at the gate—but he gave such answers as cost him least to make. “Yes, madam, Providence tries us. We are stricken for our good. Such sorrows are indeed difficult to support,” &c. These vague and cold words did not discourage the lady. She drew near his chair, as if she wished more distinctly to hear. “Ah, Monsieur, what say you? How could I have conceived of so great a misfortune!” It would have drawn tears from the dead.

Have you ever seen the distressing spectacle of a poor hound, wounded in the chase, who draws himself near his master, and licks his hands, as if begging for succour? The comparison may seem strange to those who have never seen what I describe—but at that moment it forcibly occurred to my mind. That woman, wounded to the death, and so gentle in her grief, seemed to draw herself to the feet of the priest and implore his compassion!

I observed that priest—vulgar, dry—like many men whom one meets neither good nor bad. Nothing about him indicated a heart of bronze certainly, but he was a man of wood. I could easily perceive that of all that had struck his ear, not a word had entered. He lacked a sense. Why torment a blind man with colors? He makes vague answers—perhaps sometimes they approach a meaning—but what can he do? He sees nothing.

Think not that the priest can any better comprehend the heart than a blind man can understand colors. The man without wife or child might study in books and in the world ten thousand years, and still not know a word in relation to the mysteries of the family relations. Look at the priests; neither time, occasion, nor

facilities, fail them. They pass their lives with women, who make confessions to them which they do not to their husbands. And yet the priests know and know not—and in learning all the woman, they do not understand that better and deeper part which is, in her, the life of her life. They can with great difficulty understand her as the lover, (of God or of man,) they understand her less as a wife, and as a mother, not at all. Nothing is more painful than to see them near a woman, awkwardly attempting to caress a child. They have the pitiful gestures of the flatterer or the courtier—but of the father not a shadow.

What I most lament in the condition of the man condemned to celibacy is, not merely that he is debarred from the gentle joys of the heart, but that there are and must be a thousand things in the natural and moral world, which are to him a sealed book. Many have thought, in thus isolating themselves, to give their lives to science; but that dry and mutilated life is precisely that in which science has no profundity. It may be varied, and immense in range—but it runs over the surface, and penetrates nothing. Celibacy gives an uneasy activity in investigation—a sort of readiness in pursuit, a keen subtilty in scholastics and argument. That at least was its effect in the better days of monasticism. But if it renders the senses acute and feeble against temptation, it does not soften the heart.\* Our terrorists and persecutors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were monks.† Monastic prisons were always the most cruel.‡ A life systematically negative—a life of death developes in man the instincts hostile to life. He who suffers, willingly causes suffering. The harmonious and fruitful parts of our nature, which on the one part prompt benevolence, and on the other urge genius to high invention, cannot resist this partial suicide.

Two descriptions of persons necessarily acquire much insensibility—surgeons and priests. The continual witnessing of suffering and death gradually kills in a man his sympathetic faculties; but we must remember always this distinction, that the insensibility of the surgeon is not without its utility. If he was moved by the suffering of the patient, it would destroy the steadiness of

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\* The *heart* may be dry, and *sense* very eager. Let no one attempt to establish here a contradiction with the dangers which I have pointed out in my book. The contradiction is apparent only, not real.

† For the 15th century especially, see my *History of France*, year 1413.

‡ Mabillon, *De l'Emprisonnement Monastique*. Posth. Works, II. 327.



his hand. The profession of the priest, on the contrary, requires that he should be sensible to the sufferings of others, for sympathy is most usually the most efficacious remedy in healing a wounded spirit. Independently of what we say upon the necessary insensibility of that ungrateful life, it is necessary to observe that the priest, living, in our day, in contradiction with a society, all the progress of which he condemns, is less than ever tolerant and merciful toward its sinners and rebels. The physician who does not love his patient, is all the less likely to cure him.

It is a melancholy reflection that these men, who are possessed of so little sympathy, and, what is worse, are soured by controversy, should have in their power that portion of the human race which is most gentle and tender:—those who most preserve the affections of the heart, and the better traits of human nature—who, amid the corruption of manners, remain least corrupted by selfishness and the baleful passions. In a word, those who love least, govern those who love most.

To understand how they exercise this sovereignty, it will not do to stop at the insinuating and wheedling arts which they practice towards women of the world. We must inform ourselves of the condition of those with whom no management and reserve is necessary; of those, above all, who, in convents are at the mercy of ecclesiastical superiors, who hold them under lock and key, and charge themselves with their sole protection.

We are not very confident about this *protection*. For a long time we have believed—we have had the simplicity to say that there was no need of the oversight of the law in the kingdom of Grace. But hark! From these sweet asylums, from these little places of paradise the world hears groans!

I would not speak here of the houses of constraint—of the affairs of Sens, Arragon, and Poitier—nor of the suicides which have taken place there. No, I would come much nearer home, and speak only of the most honourable and holy religious houses. How are they protected by the ecclesiastical authority?

And first as to the soul—the conscience, that chief possession, to which we would sacrifice all others. Is it true that the sisters of the hospital, who are suspected to be Jansenists, have been latterly persecuted to compel them to give up the names of the private spiritual directors whom they were supposed to have?

Is it true that these persecuted sisters obtained a truce only through the menacing intervention of a magistrate, a celebrated orator, eminently Gallican?

And for the body—for that personal liberty which the slave gains from the moment that he touches the sacred soil of France—how has the ecclesiastical authority assured that to the nuns? Is it true that a Carmelite, about sixteen leagues from Paris, was kept *in chains* several months in a convent, and afterwards *shut up for nine years among the insane*?

Is it true that a Benedictine has been placed in a sort of tomb, (*in pace*) and then in an-insane apartment—shut up amid frightful cries and imprecations, and the impurities of lost women, who, from excess to excess, have become maniacs?\*

This persecuted sister, whose crime it was to possess a mind—to love to write and to draw flowers, had served the convent a long time as steward and preceptress. She had taught the greater part of the sisters to read. And what does she demand—the punishment of her enemies? No; simply the consolation of confessing herself, receiving the communion, and in a word, support in her age, now far advanced.

“But the bishop was ignorant of this, without doubt?” The bishop knew all. He “felt very much moved,” and did nothing. The chaplain of the house knew that they were about to put a nun *in pace*. “He sighed,” and he did nothing. The vicar-general did not sigh, but took part against the nun. His ultimatum was, that she should starve, or return to her dungeon.

Who showed himself truly the bishop in this business? The magistrate. And who proved himself a true priest? The advocate—a studious young man, whom science had drawn away from his profession, but who, finding that unfortunate woman destitute of all succour, (for under the influence of a ridiculous terrorism, no person dared to plead or print a word for her,) took the matter in hand. He spoke, acted, wrote, walked, and made journeys in mid winter, at all sacrifices of time and money, de-

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\* We might have hesitated to speak of these things if they had not already been divulged by the public journals and reviews. Moreover many magistrates have already expressed their opinions upon analogous facts of the same locality. An advocate general writes to a sub-prefect:—“I had become convinced, like yourself, that the Lady — *was perfectly sane*. A longer confinement might, perhaps, *have made her really a maniac*,” &c. Letter of M. the advocate general Sorbier, cited in the *Memoir de M. Tillard*, by Sister Maria Lemonnier.

voting to the work six months of his life. May God reward him! Who showed himself here the good Samaritan? Who showed himself the neighbour of the afflicted, and raised the wounded victim in the road, whom the Pharisees had passed by? Who was the true Priest—the Father?

A witty writer of the day, calls the magistrates who interfere in the affairs of the church, “My Fathers.” He speaks in derision. But they truly merit the name.\* It has been given by the afflicted who are members of the Church of Christ, to magistrates whom I esteem no less members. They have called them *Fathers* for their paternal equity.

Too long has their beneficial intervention been arrested at the threshold of the convent, by the crafty words, “What would you do here? Would you enter to disturb the peace of these pious asylums, and to terrify timid virgins?” But these timid souls are they who scream for help. We hear them in the street!

Laymen, whoever you are; magistrates, writers, politicians, solitary thinkers, it is your duty now to do what you have neglected—to take in hand the cause of woman!

We cannot leave these women in a power so insensible and harsh, while we have so little certainty that under any circumstances, they can make themselves heard without, from the duress in which they are placed.

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\* And they have for a long time merited it—the reasons for which would be a long history to write. It suffices to recall the year 1629, when an edict, originated by the Procureur General, interdicted the monks from inflicting perpetual imprisonment, the *In pace*, &c. These cruelties however, continued, and towards the end of the century the good Mabillon wrote, (for himself it would seem, and the consolation of his own mind,) the little Treatise on Monastic Imprisonment, which was not published until after his death. I read in that treatise that, in 1350 the Parliament of Toulouse (celebrated too for its severity,) was obliged to repress the cruelties of the monks. “The king was horror-struck at their inhumanity, and he ordered that the superiors should visit these miserales (the perpetual prisoners) twice each month, and should give other monks permission to visit them twice a month—that is to say, that the prisoners should be visited at least once a week. The king caused letters patent to be issued, and although the monks made some efforts to procure a revocation of the decree, they were compelled to observe it. His Majesty and council think that it is a barbarous thing to deprive of all consolations these miserales who are weighed down with melancholy and grief. *Registers of the Parliament of Languedoc*, 1350. It is really very strange that ecclesiastics, who ought to be models of gentleness and compassion, should be obliged to learn, of secular princes and magistrates, the first principles of that humanity which they should practise towards their brethren.” Mabillon, *De l’Imprisonnement Monastic*. Posthumous Works, II. 323, 326.

No greater interest, none which better deserves our thought and action could unite us. Listen, I entreat you. That is a cause, wholly above all others, which has had the support of Heaven. We can afterwards, if we choose, resume our disputes, but let us unite to effect this !

And, first, let us frankly acknowledge the truth to ourselves. An evil avowed and known, is already half cured. Who are we to accuse of the actual condition of things? We do not accuse the Jesuits, who but follow their trade. We do not accuse the priests, who are dangerous, unquiet, and violent, only because they are unfortunate. No, it is more ourselves than any other whom we should blame !

If the dead reappear in full day—if Gothic ghosts haunt our streets in the sun-light: it is because the living have permitted the spirit of life to die out among themselves. Placed by history beside the more ancient dead—duly inhumed and consecrated according to the funeral rites, how have they re-appeared among us? Their appearance is a grave sign—a serious warning.

It has been permitted, men of our day, to recall you to yourselves, to what you should be. If the light of the future manifests itself in its light among you, why should you turn your eyes to the shades and night of the past ?

It is your duty to look to the future and to act. You do not expect the day's work completed to be placed in your hands in the morning. If the future is already among you as a germ, transmitted from the most distant past, let the future be with you also an incitement to progress—a will for improvement a paternal wish for the happiness of those who will succeed you. Love in advance the unknown son who is called The Future: labour for him—he is promised.

Upon the day when your intimates perceive in you the man of the future, and of a magnanimous will, on that day the family will be rallied and strengthened. The wife, above all, will follow you, as if she said to herself, "I am the wife of a strong man."

Modern strength is developed in the powerful freedom which disengages reality from cold forms, and liberates the spirit from the dead letter; and this may be done in the smallest matters of business, as well as in the highest sciences. Why not reveal to the companion of your life this freedom, which is to you, life itself? She passes days and years at your side, without seeing or



knowing you in your best light, or appreciating what is great within you. If she could understand your progress, free, strong, and productive in action, and in science, she would not remain enchained to idolatries and materialism. She would no longer submit to the dead letter, but would rise to a faith more free and pure, and you would become one in faith with her. She would guard the treasure of religious life common to you both, and you might pursue your dry studies. When the variety of labours, studies, and business enfeebled in you the vital unity, she would bring you back, in thought and in life, to God, the true, the only unity.

I will not attempt to put a great book\* in a small preface. I will add only a word, which at once defines and completes my idea. Man should nourish the woman. He ought to feed her, spiritually and materially, if he can, who nourishes him with her love, her milk, her parentage. Our adversaries give woman a bad aliment—we give her none at all!

To women of the easier classes, who seem beneficently decreed, through the family, to be brilliant and happy, we give no mental aliment. The poor, isolated, laborious, and unfortunate, who struggle to win their bread, we do not aid in their search for bodily aliment. The women—who are, or will be mothers—we leave to fast, in soul or body, and we are punished, above all, by the generation which is coming, for neglecting to supply them with the sustenance of life.

The good will is not generally deficient, I am happy to believe. Time only is lacking, and attention. We live oppressed with care and with difficulty—we follow little objects with the eagerness of the hunter, and neglect the great.

Man of study, or of business! You have no time, you say, to associate your wife with you in your daily progress. You leave her to her ennui, to empty sermons, to improper books, in such a

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\* How many things besiege my mind, in writing this book, which I am compelled to neglect! I would cite the intimate connection which unites the three questions of *education*, *direction*, and *penitentiary reform*—three branches of the same science. All study of *direction* throws light on *education*. The experiments which are made in *direction* are more instructive than those made upon an infant, being made on a person who is not in a state of slumber (like a child) but is all awake, in a lucid state, in the full development of intelligence, and who, moreover, seriously determines to obey. Notwithstanding the clouds of mysticism which diminish that light, the science of education might draw great profit from the experiences of direction, described with care, by luminous spirits, who know how to observe and analyze.

way, that falling below herself, less than a woman, less even than a child, she exerts even over her own son, neither the influence nor the authority of a mother. But you will have time as his age increases, to labour in vain to repair an evil that cannot be repaired, to run after a son, who, sent from college to the schools, and from the schools to the world, hardly knows his family—and who, if he travels a little, and you meet him on his return, will inquire of you your own name! The mother alone could have made him your son, but it was first necessary that you should have treated her as a wife, and strengthened her with your sentiments and your opinions, and nourished her with your life.

If I look beyond the family and the domestic affections, I find that our negligence with regard to women amounts to cruelty; the melancholy effect of which falls back upon ourselves.

You believe yourself kind, and a man of heart. You are not insensible to the fate of women. You call an old one your mother, a young one your daughter. But you have time neither to observe, nor know, that both old and young women literally die of hunger!

Two causes operate incessantly for their destruction; that great workshop, the convent, which manufactures for nothing, not counting on its labour to live; and the great magazines of the stock companies, which buy from the convents, and gradually destroy the small shops which supported the female labourer.\* To her remain but two chances—the waters of the Seine, or the streets at night, in which she may find wretches ready to take advantage of her hunger.

Men receive nearly as much of the public charities as the women. This is unjust. They have infinitely more resources; they are stronger, have a greater variety of pursuits, and better capacity for entering new ones; more energy, and better opportunities to travel in search of employment. Without speaking of handicraft, which is very well recompensed in the country, I know provinces of France where day labourers and domestic servants can hardly be procured.

Man can go and come. Woman must remain in one spot, and die.

When that poor girl, who has been starved by the competition

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\* This is the course of things. There is no person to blame. From the evil itself, we hope, will come the remedy.

of the convent, drags her wasted limbs to its gates—can she find an asylum there? For that, as she has no dowry to enrich the house, the active protection of an influential priest is necessary. But that protection is reserved for devout persons—those who have had time to observe the Month of Mary, the Catechisms of Perseverance, &c.—to those who, for a long time, have been under the hand ecclesiastic. It is a protection often very dearly purchased—a high price paid for permission to pass a life between four walls, and counterfeit a devotion which you do not feel. It were better, much, to die!

They die without noise, decently, and in solitude. We never see them descend from their garrets to the street to move under the motto, “Let us live by our labour, or die in the combat!” They make no *emeutes*—there is nothing to fear from them. Shall we have no compassion except for those whom we fear?

Men of money—to you I must talk in the language of money. I will tell you, then, that when there shall be an economical government, it will not fear to expend money to enable women to sustain themselves at their labour.\*

Not only do these unfortunate women crowd the hospitals, coming and going continually, but the children born of them, (unless they die at the asylum, for *Enfants Trouvés*,) will be like their mothers, the habitual guests of the hospitals. One wretched woman is a whole family of invalids in perspective.

Philosophers, physiologists, economists, statesmen! You all know that the excellence of the race, and the force of the people depends, above all, upon the condition of the woman. She who

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\* These who dislike poor taxes in general, and who are opposed to making a factor of the State, might nevertheless approve temporary workshops open to poor women who would otherwise fall into prostitution. This very year, one of our hospitals has taken in two women half dead with hunger, who had resisted to that point recourse to the frightful alternative. The asylums of which I speak have a model in the *Beguines* of Flanders, old institutions, too little known. I have spoken of them in my *History of France*. The view of the charming *Beguine* of Ghent, that beautiful village in the midst of the city, pretty cottages and gardens intermingled, is among my pleasantest reminiscences of travel. The *Beguines* go once a week to carry home their work. They are often sought in marriage, and in preference to others. Could we or not imitate these asylums, placing ours under the surveillance of magistrates, free from ecclesiastical domination? I submit the question to those practical men, who still remain men of heart—especially to that very zealous and enlightened body, the Municipal Council of Paris. The *Etudes sur l'Angleterre*, of M. Faucher give curious intelligence of the new views, on various attempts of this kind.

bears the child, understands it better than the father. Strong mothers give birth to strong children.

We all are, and shall be eternal debtors to the women—that they are our mothers is sufficient to make us such. One must have been miserably born, and the heir of degradation, to make merchandize of the toil and suffering of those who are all the joy of the present, and the hope of the future. What they perform with their hands, is indeed secondary—labour like our own. But the sufferings, duties, toils truly maternal—these are her higher occupation. To give birth to the child—and then to give moral birth to the man—(such, little understood in these barbarous times,) is woman's destiny. "*Fons omnium viventium!*" What would you add to that great designation?

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I have written all this with the pure and serious spirit of her, who has never failed me—in all my struggles, present with me. I lost her thirty years ago, (I was young then,) nevertheless still living, she has followed me from age to age.

She suffered with me in my evil days—she has not profited by my better fortunes. In youth I grieved her—the opportunity to console her I have never enjoyed. I know not even where her bones lie, for I was too poor then to purchase her a resting place!

How deeply am I indebted to her! I feel profoundly that I am the son of my mother. At each moment in my thoughts and words, (to say nothing of my gestures and my features,) I find my mother in myself. It is the blood of the woman in me, which creates the sympathy I feel for past ages, the tender remembrance of those who are no more.

What can I render, myself advanced in life, for the many benefits I owe her? One duty only, in which were she here, I should have her sympathy; this appeal in behalf of women and mothers.

I have written this to accompany what is considered a book of argument. That designation is wrong. The farther this book goes down to the future, the more palpable will it appear, that, notwithstanding its polemical warmth, it is a book of history, of faith, true and sincere. On what had I more fully set my heart!

EASTER, 1845.



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

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
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